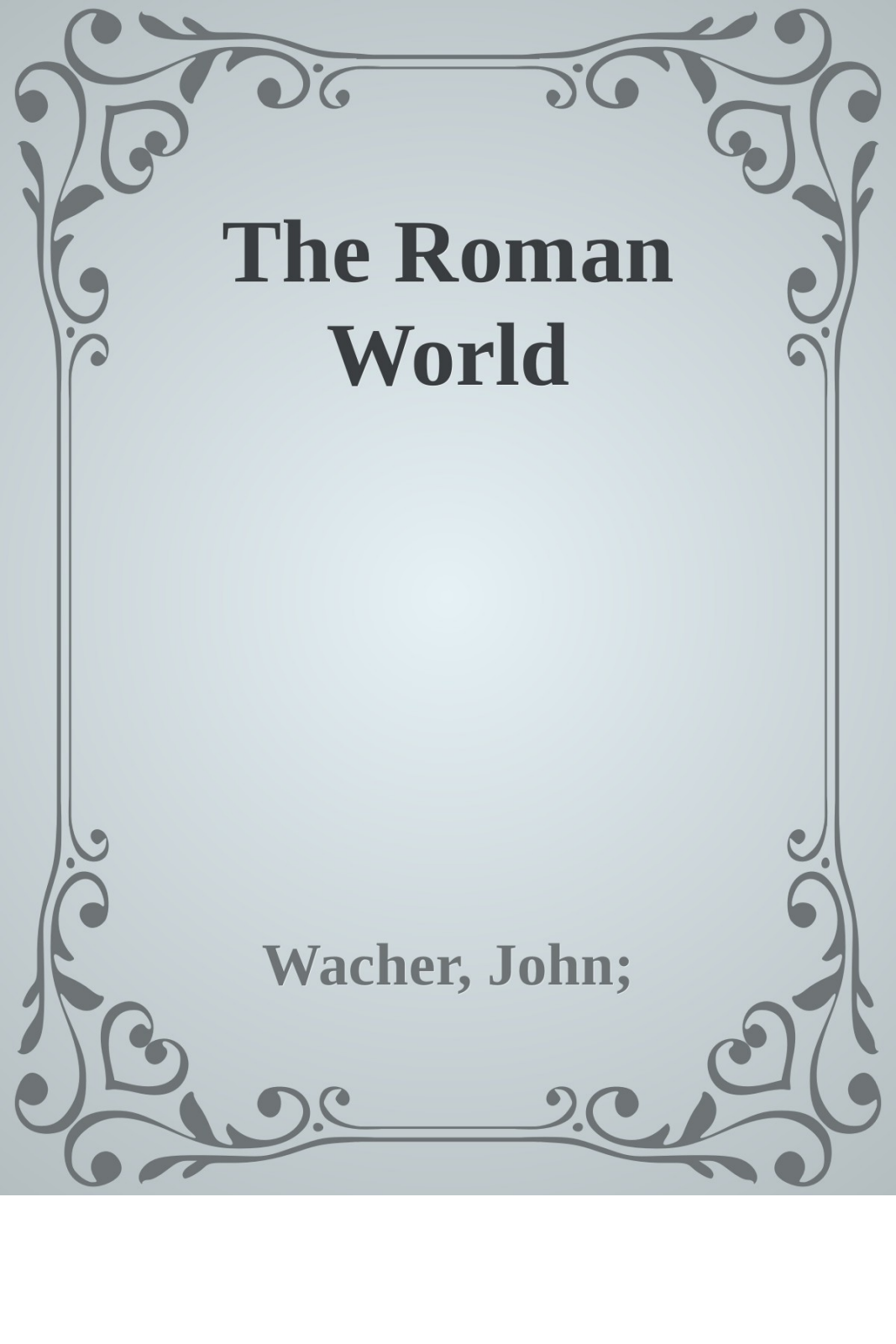


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VOLUME ONE



Edited by JOHN WACHER

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1.1 Frontispiece Rome: the Eternal City

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• PREFACE •

This book has been designed to bring together the best of both ancient historians and archaeologists on the Roman Empire. All contributors were allowed complete freedom, within only the broadest set limits, to treat their subjects as they wished; editorial action was restricted to the minimum required to produce some degree of uniformity in presentation. Consequently, each contribution has retained its individuality while no attempts have been made to remove overlaps of subject interest between them. Equally, some contributors required few or no illustrations while others asked for the maximum number, so that their distribution, although uneven, is intentional; some subjects needed such support for their proper understanding, while others did not. It was also decided that, for the sake of brevity and to avoid numerous repetitions, consolidated bibliographies would be provided for each part and not for each chapter.

The editor wishes to state, though, that all opinions expressed are those of individual contributors, with which he may, or may not, agree.

JOHN WACHER

• PREFACE TO THE REISSUED EDITION •

Fourteen years have passed since these two volumes were first published; fourteen years during which the tide of fieldwork and excavations has grown ever greater, adding immeasurably to our knowledge and understanding of the Roman Empire. This has been matched by an increasing number of books and other publications, some on aspects which had never before been attempted. But this must be placed against a background of the modern political situation, rendering some sites and areas more accessible, and unfortunately others less so.

Yet many of the fundamental truths about the Empire have remains unchanged and any attempt to update a work of this nature would largely have been a matter of detail, important though it might be. Consequently, after careful thought, it was decided to reissue the volumes as they stood, since updating, even of detail, would have been a Herculean task, rendered more difficult by the fact that four of the contributors are sadly no longer with us, while others have retired; a small number have even drifted away from archaeology and ancient history to seek other occupations or interests.

Therefore the volumes remain the same, and the original preface states their aims. If some aspects of the Roman World were omitted, as one reviewer pointed out, I must plead that, to have included them, would have produced volumes with an even more 'eye-watering price'.

JOHN WACHER
Hayle, March 2001

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• GENERAL • BIBLIOGRAPHY • • AND • PRINCIPAL • • ABBREVIATIONS •

I ANCIENT SOURCES

Ammianus Marcellinus

Apuleius

Aurelius Victor

Ausonius

BGU

Caesar, C. Julius

Cassius Dio

Cato

Codex Iustinianus

Codex Theodosianus

Columella

Diodorus Siculus

Eunapius

Eusebius

Frontinus

Gaius

Galen

Res Gestae

Metamorphoses

Caesares

De Viris Illustribus

Mosella

Berliner Griechische

Urkunden (Agyptische

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Muse en zu Berlin),

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Bellum Gallicum

Histories

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De Re Rustica Origines

Corpus Juris Civilis

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(trans. E. Pharr)

De re rustica

Bibliotheca Historica

Vitae Sophistarum

Historia Ecclesiastica

De Aquae Duct a Urbis

Romae Strategemata

Institutiones

On the Natural Faculties

<i>It. Ant.</i>	<i>Itineraria Antonini Augusti</i>
Josephus	<i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
Libanius	<i>Julianic Orations</i>
Livy	<i>Epitomae</i>
<i>Not. Dig.</i>	<i>Notitia Dignitatum in partibus occidentis orientis</i> , ed. O. Seeck, Frankfurt, 1962
Palladius	<i>De Re Rustica</i>
<i>P. Cairo Goodspeed</i>	<i>Greek Papyri from the Cairo Museum, together with Papyri of Roman Egypt from American Collections</i> , ed. E. J. Goodspeed, Chicago, 1902
<i>P. Chic. (= SB/Bh)</i>	<i>Papyri from Karanis in the Chicago Museum</i> , ed. E. J. Goodspeed, Chicago, 1902 (= ed. F. Preisigke, <i>Sammelbuck gr. Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> , 1915–)
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<i>P. Oxy.</i>	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> , eds B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, 1898–
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<i>P. Kyl.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Greek Papyri in the John Ry</i>

Pausanias	<i>lands Library at</i>
Pliny (the Elder)	<i>Manchester, 1911–</i>
<i>Rav. Cosm.</i>	<i>Graeciae Descriptio</i>
	<i>Naturalis Historia</i>
	<i>Cosmographia Anonymi</i>
	<i>Ravennatis</i>
Sallust	<i>Catalina, Iugurtha,</i>
	<i>Fragmenta Ampliora</i>
<i>S.H.A.</i>	<i>Scriptores Historiae</i>
	<i>Augustae</i>
Statius	<i>Silvae</i>
	<i>Thebaid</i>
Strabo	<i>Geographica</i>
Suetonius	<i>Vitae Caesarum</i>
Tacitus	<i>Agricola</i>
	<i>Annales</i>
	<i>Germania</i>
	<i>Historiae</i>
Varro	<i>De Re Rustica</i>
Vegetius	<i>De re militari</i> , trans. Lt.
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Vitruvius	<i>De Architectura</i>
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Zosimus	<i>New History of Rome</i>

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	Bourne, Austin, Texas,
	1961
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient</i>

<i>CIG</i>	<i>History</i> , 1923–39 <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecorum</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CMH</i>	<i>Cambridge Medieval History</i>
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<i>IL Alg.</i>	<i>Inscriptions latines de l'Algérie</i> , 2 vols, ed. S. Gsell <i>et al.</i> , Paris, 1922, 1957
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , I–V, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin, 1892– 1914
<i>ILTun.</i>	<i>Inscriptions latines de la Tunisie</i> , ed. A. Merlin,

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<i>Insc.It.</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Italiae</i>
<i>ISM</i>	<i>Inscriptiile din Scythia</i>
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• GLOSSARY •

Acropolis

aediles

the citadel of Athens.
magistrates with powers
of minor jurisdiction.
They were normally
responsible for public
buildings and works,
such as the aqueducts
and markets.

aedituus

the keeper of the
consecrated building.

agora

the *forum* (q.v.) or civic
centre of a Greek city,
usually consisting of an
open space surrounded
by colonnades and
public buildings.

annona

originally the corn
supply of Rome. Hence
the *annona militaris*, a
tax in kind imposed on
Italy and the provinces,
at first exceptionally, but
later regularly, intended
to supply the army.

apolusinoi

Ara Pacis

demobilized soldiers.
a monument erected in 9
BC, in the Campus
Martius to commemorate
Augustus' safe return
from Gaul and Spain.

<i>archon</i>	originally office holders in a state in Greece. Later the chief magistrate of a city in the Greek part of the Empire.
<i>atrium</i>	the forecourt or entrance hall of a Roman house.
<i>auctoritas</i>	the authority vested in prominent men by virtue of the high office they had held: that of an elder statesman.
<i>ballista</i>	an artillery piece, actuated by some form of torsion, to fire an iron bolt or small rock.
<i>basilica</i>	a large, multi-purpose public hall, normally attached to the <i>fora</i> of towns in the western Empire; later applied to domestic and commercial buildings of similar architectural form, and also to early churches.
<i>birrus Britannicus</i>	a long, sleeveless hooded cape, probably made of hard-wearing wool; the nap was probably left long to repel rain. The garment most likely originated in Gaul and was listed in the Edict of Prices of Diocletian.
<i>boule</i>	the council of a self-governing community in the Greek world,

	originally formed to advise the king of a city-state.
<i>bustum</i>	the place where the bodies of the dead were cremated and buried; also a tomb (q.v. <i>ustrinum</i>).
<i>capitolium</i>	the principal temple of a city, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva – the Capitoline Triad, after the temple on the Capitoline Hill in Rome.
<i>centonarii</i>	dealers in rags; makers of patchwork.
<i>cheiristai</i>	men of lowest degree.
<i>cives</i>	a citizen.
<i>civitas</i>	primarily citizenship of any type; but also used to describe a self-governing community of citizens – usually urban – of any origin.
<i>clipeus</i>	a shield, usually round and of bronze, occasionally used to carry a bust or other representation of a deity.
<i>collegium</i>	an association or club, usually formed for religious (e.g. burial, priestly) or trade (e.g. blacksmiths, carpenters, etc.) purposes. The membership and constitution would be fixed by statute.
<i>colonus</i>	a member of a <i>colonia</i> ; also a tenant farmer on

	public land, or on an imperial or private estate.
<i>comes</i>	a title bestowed on leading military and civil officers of state in the late Empire.
<i>comitatus</i>	an escort or retinue, usually associated with an emperor.
<i>comitia</i>	assemblies, usually of Rome, but also of chartered cities.
<i>concilium</i>	any assembly, originally of Rome (cf. Plebeian Assembly), later of the provinces, composed of delegates from the constituent self-governing communities.
<i>conductor</i>	a contractor who either carried out work for a private person or who leased agricultural and/or industrial property, either on behalf of a third party or himself.
<i>curia</i>	the Senate House of Rome; also the name given to the places of assembly of municipal councils in the provinces; in many places attached to the <i>basilica</i> (q.v.).
<i>demiourgoi</i>	craftsmen and 'professional' men of independent means; later forming small advisory councils in states, in the

	Greek parts of the Empire, with varying functions.
<i>dignitas</i>	a concept implying a dignified rank, bearing or authority.
<i>di Manes</i>	the gods of the underworld.
<i>di Superi</i>	the gods of the upper world.
<i>Domus Divinae</i>	the 'divine house' of deified emperors and past dynasties; sometimes invoked in dedications to the imperial cult.
<i>duumvir</i>	a senior municipal magistrate.
<i>dux</i>	a military commander acting above his substantive rank; in the Late Empire the title of a military commander in some frontier areas.
<i>eques</i>	a horseman; commonly a term used for a cavalry trooper.
<i>equites</i>	cavalry; also used to describe the social class (equestrian) below that of the senatorial order. Most military prefects and tribunes, as well as procurators, were recruited from this class.
<i>exedra</i>	a hall.
<i>fabri</i>	literally armourers (military); also blacksmiths. <i>Praefectus fabrum</i> , originally the

fellahin

flamen Dialis

foederatus

foedus

forum

fustuarium

Gaea

gene

genius loci

Gottkönigtum

grammateis

commander of the
above, became an
honorary title used to
describe a general's
principal staff officer.
the peasant class in
Egypt.

the priest assigned to the
cult of Jupiter.

an ally, confederate.
a treaty.

an open space, usually in
the centre of a town or
city, used for political
gatherings and, in most
cases, for markets. Most
were also surrounded by
colonnades linked with
other public buildings,
one of which was
frequently the *basilica*
(q.v.).

normally a military
punishment, whereby the
defaulter was cudgelled
to death.

the Earth Goddess.
organized corporations
devoted to ancestor
worship in Greece.

a nameless spirit thought
to inhabit a specific
place.

theocratic monarchy; the
divine nature of
kingship.

a secretary, normally of
public bodies in the
Greek parts of the
Empire.

<i>hasta</i>	a spear, used as a badge of distinction.
<i>hastatus</i>	literally a spearman; also used to describe the companies in the first line of battle in the Roman army, and the commanders of these companies.
Hippodamian grid	the adaptation of a town-planning system by the architect Hippodamus of Miletus.
<i>honestiores</i>	a social, and legally undefined, distinction applied to the upper class (q.v. <i>humiliores</i>).
<i>humiliores</i>	the lower social class (q.v. <i>honestiores</i>).
<i>imagines</i>	representations, statues or pictures (e.g. of an emperor).
<i>imaginifer</i>	a soldier who carried the emperor's image as a standard.
<i>imperium</i>	the highest power of the principal magistrates and pro-magistrates of Rome, which conferred on the recipient the ability to command an army and administer the most extreme penalties of the law.
<i>inquilinus</i>	an inhabitant of a place in which he had not been born; also a tenant.
<i>iugerum</i>	an area of land measuring 73 by 36.5 m (80 by 40 yd).

iurisprudentes
ius gentium

ius Italicum

ius Latii

koinon
lar familiaris

latifundium

legatus

leges

jurists.

‘international’ law open to both Roman and non-Roman.

the legal status of Roman land in Italy, exempt from certain taxes, in contrast to the provinces. It was later granted to some provincial municipalities.

the so-called Latin rights, which became an intermediate stage in the promotion of non-Roman communities to full Roman status.

common assembly.

spiritual guardians, especially of servants, of a household, which seem to have originated on farms. Usually depicted as small statuettes of bronze or terracotta, placed in the house. an exceptionally large estate.

normally the commander of a legion (when *legionis*) or a governor of an imperial province (when *Augusti pro praetore*) also used for some other imperial appointments.

binding agreements between two or more parties, one of which

	might be the state, broadly divided between <i>leges rogata</i> and <i>leges datae</i> . The latter were issued, with the approval of the Senate, by a Roman magistrate and were mainly concerned with the provinces; from the end of the first century they were replaced by imperial constitutions.
<i>lex provinciarum</i>	the constitution by which a governor administered his province.
<i>liberalitas</i>	of a noble, kind or friendly disposition; generosity or gifts.
<i>libertus</i>	an emancipated slave.
<i>limes</i>	originally a road leading into unoccupied territory; finally adapted to describe a complete system of frontier works.
<i>locus consecratus</i>	a sacred place.
<i>Magna Graecia</i>	the collective name for the Greek cities of southern Italy.
<i>manumission</i>	the act of granting freedom to a slave.
<i>mercator</i>	a merchant, especially a wholesale dealer (see <i>negotiator</i>).
<i>metropolis</i>	an honorary title usually granted to provincial capitals in the Greek part of the empire.
<i>negotiator</i>	a trader, wholesaler,

neocorate	business agent or manager (see <i>mercator</i>). the body to which <i>neokoroi</i> (q.v.) belonged.
<i>neokoroi</i>	persons in charge of a temple; supervisors of sacrifices.
<i>nome</i>	the Greek name for the administrative districts of Egypt, and some other neighbouring eastern provinces.
<i>numen</i>	the divine will of a deity; the spiritual power of an emperor.
<i>nymphaeum</i>	a fountain or spring consecrated to the nymphs.
<i>obaeratus</i>	debt bondage.
<i>odeum</i>	a small theatre or covered hall, used especially for music competitions and recitations.
<i>officina</i>	a workshop or factory.
<i>oppidum</i>	a town; urban settlement; also used to describe Iron Age hill-forts and fortified valley settlements.
<i>optio</i>	rank in the Roman army below that of centurion.
<i>ordo</i>	the council of decurions in a municipal or similar local government institution.
<i>paeon</i>	a religious or festive hymn, often of triumph.
<i>parens patriae</i>	an alternative version of <i>pater patriae</i> , ‘father of

<i>parilis</i>	the country', a title adopted by some emperors.
<i>patera</i>	equal. a bowl or dish used for making offering and libations.
<i>pax Romana</i>	the peace which supposedly came about as the result of the expansion of Roman influence; a political concept used to proclaim the benefits of Roman rule.
<i>peculium</i>	money, goods, land, etc. which a slave was allowed to accumulate with the full knowledge of his master. It was often used to purchase freedom.
<i>pedites</i>	infantry.
<i>peristyle</i>	an enclosed court in a building surrounded by columns.
<i>phrontistes</i>	a philosopher.
<i>pilum</i>	a throwing spear used by legionaries, with a soft iron shank which bent on impact, causing the weapon to become attached to the object it had struck.
<i>plebiscitum</i>	a resolution of a plebeian tribal assembly presided over by a plebeian magistrate.
<i>polis</i>	the Greek city-state; under the Empire it came

<i>pontifex</i>	to be used generally to mean a city. a priest normally connected with the official cults of the state; <i>pontifex maximus</i> was a title assumed by most emperors.
<i>praefectus praetor</i>	a prefect of the Praetorian Guard.
<i>praeses</i>	a term which, in the Late Empire, came to be used generally for officers of gubernatorial status.
<i>praetor</i>	a senior magistrate of Rome, next in seniority to the consuls; the number varied. In the early Republic they were connected with military affairs; it eventually became an honorary title.
<i>primicerius notariorum</i>	the head of the public record office in the Late Empire.
<i>principes</i>	originally the second line of an army in battle order, lying between the <i>hastate</i> (q.v.) and <i>triarii</i> ; in the imperial army it was used to describe the centurions of a first legionary cohort.
<i>providentia</i>	foresight, providence, later personified as a deity.
<i>quaestor</i>	the lowest of the regular magistrates in Rome. Under the principate,

	they were attached to emperors and provincial governors as staff officers; they also appear as municipal magistrates and in <i>collegia</i> (q.v.). In most cases, they were normally connected with financial matters.
<i>rector</i>	sometimes used to describe a provincial governor.
<i>regiones</i>	the divisions of the city of Rome; districts in provinces overseen by a <i>regionarius</i> , usually a legionary centurion.
<i>res privata</i>	one of the three divisions of the imperial treasury in the Late Empire which dealt primarily with imperial property.
<i>rex sacrorum</i>	a priest, subordinate to the <i>pontifex maximum</i> (q.v.), who assumed the sacral functions of the kings after their expulsion from Rome.
<i>sacrae largitiones</i>	one of the three divisions of the imperial treasury in the Late Empire which dealt with mines, mints and state factories and also collected taxes in cash.
<i>scutum</i>	a rectangular shield, normally used by legionaries.
<i>Senatus Consultum</i>	the advice of the Senate to the magistrates; later

<i>sicarii</i>	<i>consulta</i> often had the force of law.
<i>stategos</i>	assassins, bandits. the governor of an Egyptian district (q.v. <i>nome</i>) and the regular Greek equivalent for the Latin <i>praetor</i> (q.v.).
<i>stephanophoroi</i>	certain magistrates in Greek states, who had the right to wear a crown or wreath.
<i>stipendarii</i>	those receiving pay, e.g. soldiers.
<i>sufes</i>	the chief Carthaginian magistrate corresponding to the Roman consul.
<i>suovetaurilia</i>	a sacrifice consisting of a pig, a ram and a bull.
synoecism	the joining of several communities into one city-state.
<i>tabularium</i>	various types of record office, often connected with taxation in a civilian context.
<i>temenos</i>	the consecrated and enclosed precinct of a temple.
<i>toga virilis</i>	the <i>toga</i> assumed by boys on reaching manhood.
<i>togata</i>	native Italian comedy based on the Greek New Comedy.
<i>tractus</i>	territory, district or region.
<i>tria nomina</i>	the three names of a Roman citizen,

	<i>praenomen, nomen</i> and <i>cognomen</i> .
<i>tribuni militum</i>	in the Republican army the senior officers of legions. With the decline of their importance, they were divided into two classes, the <i>laticlavii</i> of senatorial, and the <i>angusticlavii</i> of equestrian, descent.
<i>tribunicia potestas</i>	in the Republic the power of the officers of the plebs; later assumed by most emperors annually, while the office also remained a step in the senatorial career.
truss	a support for a roof or bridge.
<i>turma</i>	a troop of a cavalry regiment.
<i>ustrinum</i>	a place for the cremation of the dead (see <i>bustum</i>).
<i>vallum</i>	an earth wall or rampart, sometimes incorporating palisades. Incorrectly used to describe the embanked ditch to the rear of Hadrian's Wall.
<i>velites</i>	lightly-armed soldiers of the Republican army.
<i>vergobret</i>	the title of the chief magistrate of the Gallic tribe of the Aedui.
<i>verutum</i>	a type of javelin.
<i>viereckschanze</i>	a square, ditched enclosure characteristic of the Celtic Iron Age in

Britain and Europe,
often associated with a
religious function and
containing a totem and/
or temple.

PART 1

• INTRODUCTION •

· INTRODUCTION ·

John Wachter

The influence of the Roman world in antiquity was immense, stretching far beyond the Empire's boundaries. The latter, at their greatest extent, included the entire Mediterranean basin from the fringes of the Sahara in the south to beyond the Rhine and Danube in the north, eastwards to the head of the Persian Gulf, Syrian and Arabian deserts, and westwards to the Atlantic and North and Irish Seas. Beyond lay contacts, mainly through trade, with China and India, east Africa and trans-Saharan tribes, central Europe up to the Baltic, Scotland and Ireland; Roman coins have reputedly been found in Manchuria.

It took time to grow and was not constant; it had its roots in the Roman Republic, Hellenistic East, Carthaginian Africa and Celtic Europe ([Part 2](#)). The principal agency for the expansion from city-state to world-wide empire was the army ([Part 3](#)), which both followed and was followed by traders and merchants. The Roman army began as a citizen army under the Republic which was called out when need arose. As the needs grew and service lengthened, it developed into a permanent, professional army, trained and organized to a very high standard; providing it could choose its battleground, there were few other contemporary forces which could withstand its onslaught. Yet despite the extent of the Empire, the army never possessed more than thirty legions, although this number was considerably augmented with, at first non-citizen, auxiliaries of infantry and cavalry; even then its total manpower, at the height of the Principate, probably never exceeded much more than 350,000 men. At that same time, the frontiers, where almost all the army was ultimately stationed, stretched for nearly 10,000 km (6,000 miles), which, averaging out at about thirty-

five men per kilometre, was no great concentration, especially since there was no central reserve; if one area was threatened, it could only be reinforced from another which was peaceful. Consequently, the chief external danger to the empire lay in one or more simultaneous attacks, which happened

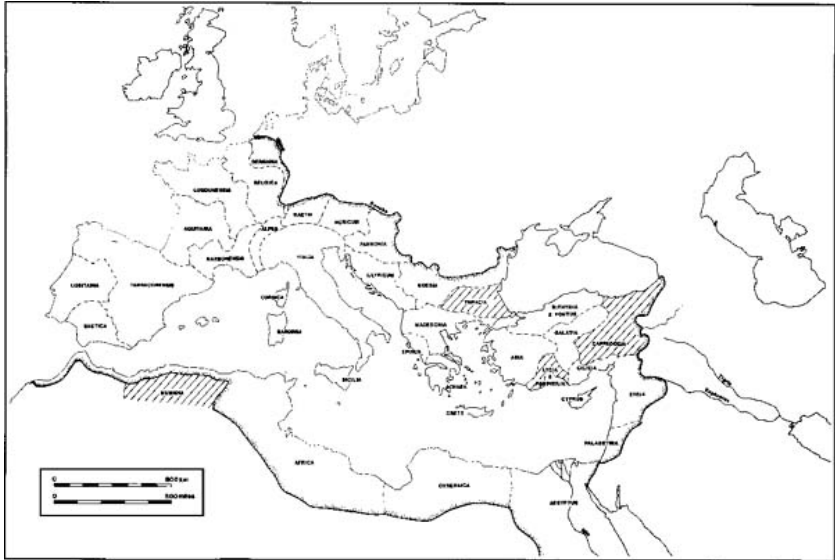


Figure 1.1 The Empire under Augustus. Shaded areas are client kingdoms

with increasing frequency in the fourth and fifth centuries, and led to marked changes in strategy and organization.

But even the frontiers ([Part 4](#)) were slow to develop and subsequently to decline. The concept of a fortified, linear barrier was at first anathema to the Roman ideal of unlimited conquest. But gradually, as the ideal lost its momentum, caused by setbacks and the increasing strains which its pursuit placed upon the Empire's reserves of manpower, a more pragmatic approach was adopted by successive emperors towards the boundaries. This led ultimately to the construction of linear barriers to supplement natural features such as rivers, mountains or deserts, with garrisons strung out along them. A great deal of argument has been caused by the remarkable diversity presented by these barriers, which range in type from little more than a stout fence in parts of Germany, through modest walls in Numidia to the massive structure of Hadrian's Wall, with its implied degree of 'overkill'. Only in the east, where Rome faced a potential enemy of approximately equal strength, were little or no supplementary barriers erected, so providing an important clue to the solution of the problem

argued by many that there was no such thing as a Roman frontier policy. The inherent weaknesses of all such barriers were twofold: they were only as strong as the fighting garrisons made them, and, once punctured, there was nothing then left to hold an advancing enemy. Hence the uselessness of providing any real barriers in the east against a power of equivalent strength: Parthia. Once this is appreciated, it can then be argued that the nature of the barriers, upon erection, was in each case nicely adjusted to meet the specific needs, at a certain time and at any given point, on the imperial boundaries. The nature of the needs and threats changed with the times, and it is not surprising therefore to find that the Late Empire required defences of a very different character from those deemed adequate in the second century.

The core of the Empire had for long been familiar with all levels of urban development, inheriting and adapting ideas from Greece, the East and from Africa (Part 5). But in the north and west lay areas which were either in a state of urban infancy, or altogether unfamiliar with its way of life. Into these areas marched the army, bringing with it, even if diluted, all forms of Roman cultural achievement, which included the urban ideal. It founded fortresses and forts, which, because of the spending power wielded by each soldier, attracted local, and sometimes not-so-local, traders. In time, they tended to settle down in nucleated settlements outside the forts, and indeed were often encouraged to do so by the military authorities. In time also many of these settlements grew and developed the full functions of urban centres, which were further augmented by the Roman policy of settling retired legionaries in model towns, or *coloniae*. Some native settlements, though, did not grow to this level, usually for economic reasons, and so provided a whole range of villages to match those in other, more developed parts of the Empire, where similar forces prevailed.

Binding all together within the provincial system were the forces of the law. The

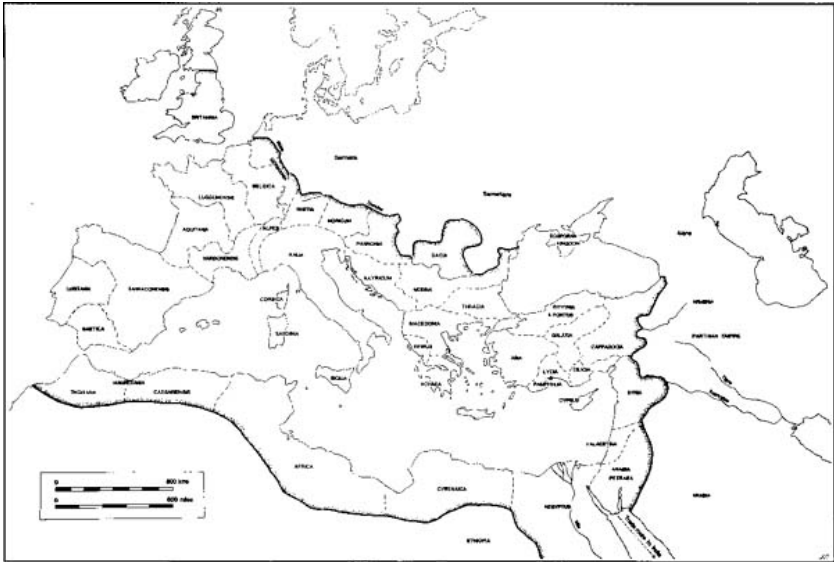


Figure 1.2 The Empire under Hadrian

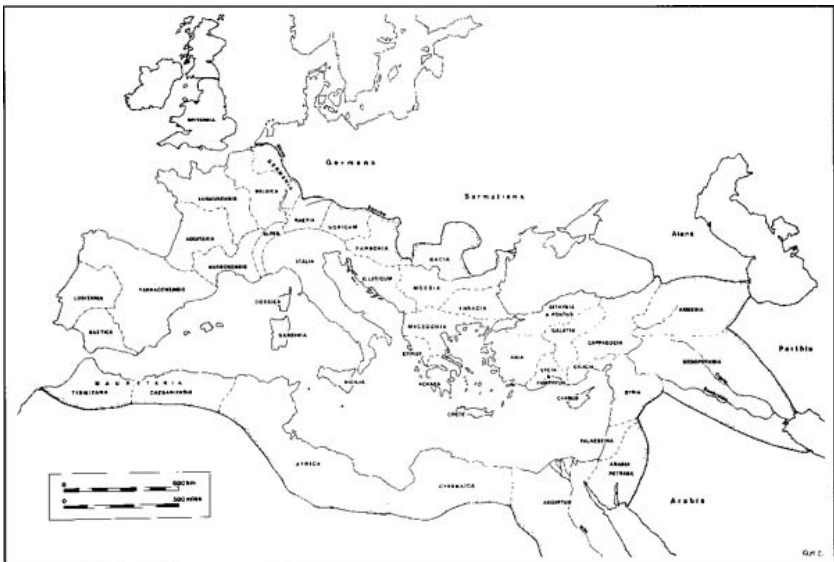


Figure 1.3 The Empire under Severus

central laws of the Empire, as with so many of its aspects, were firmly rooted in the Republic, and produced in time a system where much of the burden of administration was placed on the shoulders of local leaders, and interference by, or recourse to, the provincial governors, must at first have been the exception rather than the norm ([Part 6](#)); the path was eased by

allowing acceptable local native law to continue in existence alongside Roman law in many provinces. Gradually, though, changes brought about by the difficulties of the Late Empire tied more and more people ever more tightly to the state, as it interfered, for good or ill, in their affairs. Taxes increased, as did the number of civil servants or those dependent on the bounty of the government. Indeed it has been suggested that the increase in the official class was so enormous that the receivers of public money seemed to outnumber the tax payers, while, in the end, tax-collectors were demanding the means for an administration which ruled but could no longer protect.

Despite the growth of urban and semi-urban settlements throughout the Empire, it is probably true to say that by far and away the greater proportion of the population dwelt in the country and engaged in rural activities ([Part 7](#)). The Empire's economy was firmly linked to agriculture and the provision of food for the army and for the inhabitants of the cities always remained a prime objective. The existence of a permanent and profitable food market enabled many landowners, whose earliest interests had lain almost entirely in subsistence farming, to increase their holdings and to build substantial residences. Agricultural methods were also improved – up to a point; some occurred in both farm animals and cultivated crops, by selective breeding, while many of the outlying provinces gained by the introduction of better implement technology. Primarily the Empire depended on adequate grain production, but wine, olive oil, wool, leather and meat were all important to the economy.

But the economy of the Empire depended on more than just agricultural produce, important though it was ([Part 8](#)). One of the principal benefits which the Empire conferred upon its inhabitants was a comparatively stable monetary system of a trimetallic nature with ample low-value coins for small change, so that even the meanest transactions could take place. The monetary system in turn depended on the supply of necessary metals, gold, silver and copper, while iron and tin also formed part of the mining economy, which was vital for the Empire's survival. Exhaustion of many of the primary metal sources in the Late Empire was to cause a crippling inflation. It was not only a common and convenient currency throughout the Empire which facilitated trade, but also the establishment of better means of communication. Roads, rivers and the sea, augmented in a few places by canals, provided the arteries down which flowed, not only the necessary supplies to the army, but also a greatly increased volume of trade. It was in this that the Roman world reached out to its fullest extent, sending its manufactured goods far beyond the frontiers and receiving raw

materials often of an exotic nature in return. Ideas travelled with the goods, bringing new religions which mingled

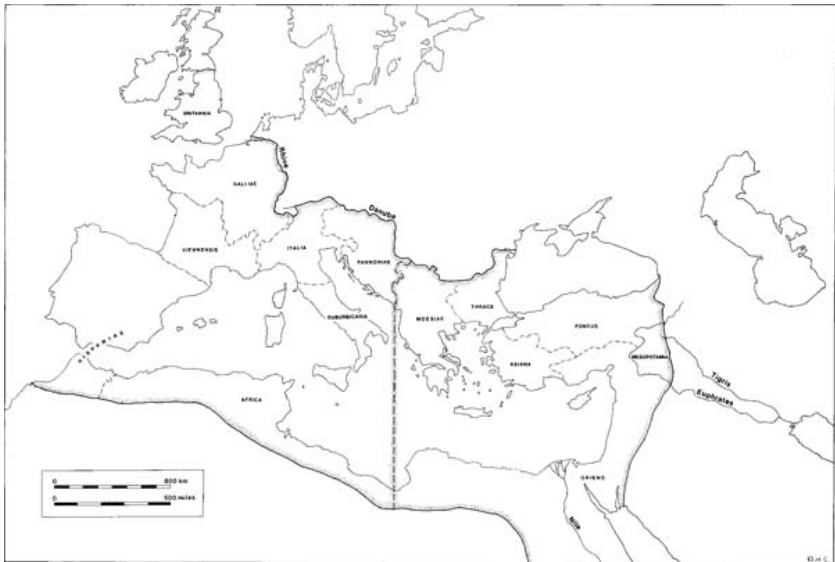


Figure 1.4 The Empire at the beginning of the fourth century. The dioceses and divisions between east and west are shown

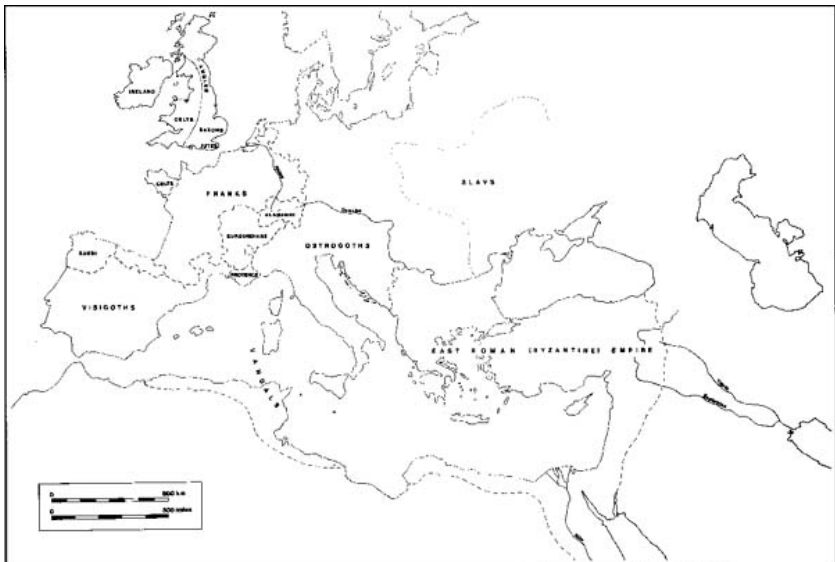


Figure 1.5 The collapse of the Empire in the west

with the cults of the Empire ([Part 10](#)); in most cases, the inhabitants were

far too superstitious to ignore them, and, by means of the *interpret at to Romana*, gave many a place in the pantheon of Roman deities.

The society which made up the Empire was diverse, cosmopolitan, often much-travelled and multi-lingual (Part 9); Greeks and Syrians are found in northern Britain, while Britons served in the army and retired in Dacia and Germany. Undoubtedly troop movements stirred the mixture. There were divisions between social classes, primarily between Roman citizen and non-citizen, just as there were between freeborn, freedman and slave. Equally there was a good deal of social mobility: the non-citizen aspired to the citizenship, as a slave did to his freedom; the son of a freedman might be freeborn and so heir to much that had passed by his father. The extension of the citizenship to all freeborn in the early third century removed some of these divisions, but at the same time caused others to be created. It is important, though, to remember that, as a slave-owning society, there was normally an abundance of cheap labour, supplemented by condemned criminals for the really nasty jobs, such as mining and sewer-cleaning. The number of slaves probably increased in the later Empire, and there must also have been a rise in the number of freeborn 'peasant' class, bound to the land they worked by their tenancy agreements, and so little better than slaves. Society was also reflected by its art, from the rich patrons to the practitioners who executed their commissions.

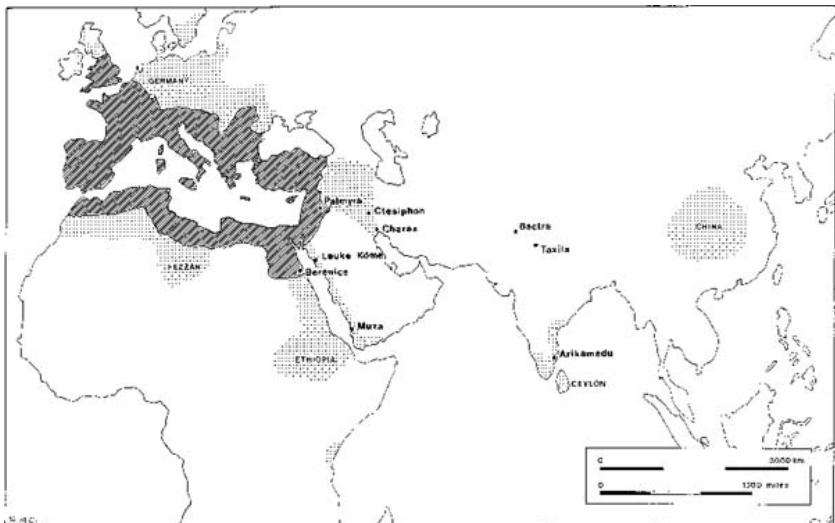


Figure 1.6 The Empire beyond the frontiers

As with many other things in the Empire, some remarkable fusions took place between the different artistic styles of its component parts.

The endurance of the Roman Empire for five hundred years is one of the success stories of history. That it survived so long is a sign of its principal achievement, whereby a heterogeneous mixture of races and creeds were induced to settle down together in a more or less peaceful way under the *Pax Romana*.

PART 2

· THE · RISE · OF · THE · EMPIRE ·

• CELTIC • EUROPE • BEFORE • • THE • ROMANS •

John Collis

Introduction

Within temperate Europe, the zone north of the Alps but south of the North European Plain, there was a main stream of development which presented a fairly homogeneous picture in terms of social and economic development, and in material culture. This will form the main theme of this brief study. On its periphery, in the German Mittelgebirge, the Alpine valleys, the Atlantic coast of France, and western Britain, there was a number of more disparate groups, varied in material culture, and with social and economic trajectories that differed considerably from that of the main zone. Because of their lack of homogeneity, these societies are dealt with only in passing, or not at all. Space precludes any other approach, even though they formed an integral part of iron age society, being the source of major raw materials such as metals and salt, and even though at the time of the Roman conquest, they played a disproportionate role in military events, as their low level of social organization and often mountainous environment made permanent conquest difficult.

The nomenclature used here is that developed by German scholars, based on the system devised by Reinecke earlier this century. [Figure 2.1](#) shows the approximate relationship with the Déchelette/Viollier system, which may be more familiar to British readers, and also some approximate dates are suggested. The bibliography has been kept brief, and those interested in following up any points are referred to the contributor's two recent books, *The European Iron Age*, which gives a general background to the period,

and *Oppida: earliest towns north of the Alps* which deals in depth with the period covered in this essay. Cunliffe's book *Iron Age Communities in Britain* provides an excellent introduction to the British Iron Age.

By the third century BC a broadly homogeneous group of societies had developed

Tischler	Reinecke	Déchelette	date
	Hallstatt C1	Hallstatt I	700
	Hallstatt C2		
	Hallstatt D1	Hallstatt II	600
	Hallstatt D2		
	Hallstatt D3		
	La Tène A	La Tène Ia	475
Early	La Tène B1	La Tène Ib	400
La Tène	La Tène B2	La Tène Ic	
	La Tène C1	La Tène IIa	250
Middle	La Tène C2	La Tène IIb	
La Tène	La Tène D1	La Tène III	100
	La Tène D2	Gallo-Romaine précoce	50
Late	La Tène D3		
La Tène	Augustan	Augustan	20

Figure 2.1 Chronological and cultural table

in the zone from Romania in the east to south-eastern Britain in the west, and from the central Alps to the highland belt that runs from the Carpathians, through the German Mittelgebirge, and into Belgium. There was a general, simple level of social organization with no marked social differentiation, no major centres or hill-forts and a relatively non-specialized organization of production and industry. Trade was localized, and few, if any, goods from the classical world found their way into the area. Though traditionally this culture is referred to as ‘Celtic’, ethnically and linguistically it was probably varied, as almost everywhere there can be seen continuity from the preceding Hallstatt period, and, as in Britain, La Tène material culture, brooches, weapon types, and above all, the abstract art style which flourished on ornaments and sword scabbards, was gradually absorbed by the indigenous society.

By the second century, and increasingly into the first century BC, this homogeneity disappeared. Trade with the Mediterranean encouraged social

differentiation, conflict for resources led to more developed levels of social organization, and eventually to patterns of settlement nucleated for defence. With nucleation came industrialization and urbanization. Ethnically too the situation became more complex, especially with the gradual absorption of the areas north of the Danube into the Germanic cultural sphere during the first century BC.

Social and political organization

Direct evidence on the level of social and political organization is contained in meagre Latin and Greek texts, but it is clear that at one extreme were state organizations closely comparable with those of the classical world, at the other fairly simple tribal organizations, such as Caesar encountered in northern Gaul, or among the tribes of northern and western Britain in which some form of lineage or clan predominated. At the state level the best information exists on the tribe of the Aedui, who elected an annual chief magistrate, the *vergobret*. There were rules which did not allow for re-election, or for a close relative to be elected during the lifetime of an *ex-vergobret*. These are clear attempts by the ruling oligarchy to prevent any one individual or family dominating, and so establishing dynastic monarchy. Such states were however vulnerable to individuals' ambitions, as the histories of Dumnorix of the Aedui or Orgetorix of the Helvetii show. Occasionally kings did emerge, though often like Commius of the Atrebates, it may have been due to Roman support. Otherwise it was through some form of monopoly control – military (Ariovistus), collection of river tolls (Dumnorix), or external trade (Cunobelin?). The Aedui also had a 'senate' which met at their chief town, Mont Beuvray (Bibracte), and the state could also raise funds, for instance by auctioning the right to collect river tolls.

Unlike the Mediterranean region, these states were based on tribal groupings rather than cities, as urbanization came later than the state, and it is perhaps not without significance that it is not the city name but the tribe's which tends to survive in modern place names: Paris (Lutetia Parisiorum), Rheims (Durocortorum Remorum), Bourges (Avaricum Biturigum), but such was their political and social organization that these states were readily absorbed into the Roman administrative system. Less is known of the simpler societies. The lack of any centralized organization is usually implied by the Roman sources rather than described. Also these societies

are only encountered under periods of stress, when temporary war leaders might be appointed to co-ordinate and unify a tribe which under normal circumstances might be in a state of internal conflict of feud and vendetta. Thus individuals such as Cassivellaunus are given greater prominence than they deserve and their power may have been as short-lived as the crisis that brought them to the top. Other societies may not have achieved even this level of unity; Vespasian's conquest of the Durotriges in Dorset seems to have been a piecemeal affair, with each hill-fort organizing its own defence. Group identity in the form of a tribal name did not guarantee co-operation.

Settlement pattern

The second and first centuries BC saw fundamental changes in settlement pattern with the appearance of nucleated defended '*oppida*' which have been claimed as the earliest urban settlements in temperate Europe (Collis, 1984b). In the immediately preceding centuries over much of temperate Europe the small hamlet or agricultural village had been the norm, and even hill-forts were a rare phenomenon, confined largely to the Atlantic Coast, in Brittany and western Britain. The farming settlement at Manching in Bavaria started to increase in size in the third century BC and by the second it had achieved urban proportions, but at present it stands alone. Elsewhere the most complex settlements encountered are 'industrial villages' such as Mšecké Žehrovice in Bohemia or Aulnat in central France. The former was working iron and producing saponite bracelets and had a double *Viereckschanze*, the latter was working gold, silver, bronze, iron, glass, textiles and bone, but was by no stretch of the imagination urban.

In the second half of the second century larger open settlements were appearing in western Europe: Breisach and Basel on the Rhine, Levroux in central France (fig. 2.2), the latter being about 12 ha (30 acres) in size. Trade, including contact with the Mediterranean world, was one factor that led to their development, and similar sites are now beginning to be found on the Rhône and Saône, the major routes to the Mediterranean. However this is not the case in central Europe, in Czechoslovakia and the German Mittelgebirge, where the earliest *oppida* appear in La Tène C2. At present ignorance must be confessed of what preceded them or caused them to come into existence; pressure from German expansion in northern Europe

still appears the best explanation. During La Tène D, at the end of the second and beginning of the first centuries BC, *oppida* appear in western Europe as well. Formerly open settlements such as Manching were enclosed, and other settlements were abandoned for new defensive positions on hill-tops at Levrux (fig. 2.2), Basel and Breisach. In these latter cases the defended *oppidum* is about the same size as the preceding settlement, but with the larger *oppida* we are clearly dealing with a number of different settlements joining together. Aulnat 7 ha (17 acres) was abandoned when Gergovie 150 ha (370 acres) was founded. In many cases the new site developed rapidly to become a major centre of population (Gergovie, Mont Beuvray, Alise-Ste-Reine), others were soon abandoned or only possessed a small population (Staffelberg, Heidengraben bei Grabenstetten). What impact these new sites had on the total settlement pattern is unclear. In some cases it may be that there was a total nucleation of the population and complete abandonment of the countryside, but more normally it seems that the developing artisan class and social élite formed the population of the new towns, while the farmers returned to the countryside.

Excavations on the *oppida* have shown they are complex in both their social and economic organization. Large fenced areas (palisade enclosures up to a hectare in size) surround large timber buildings and other ancillary buildings, and they may be the

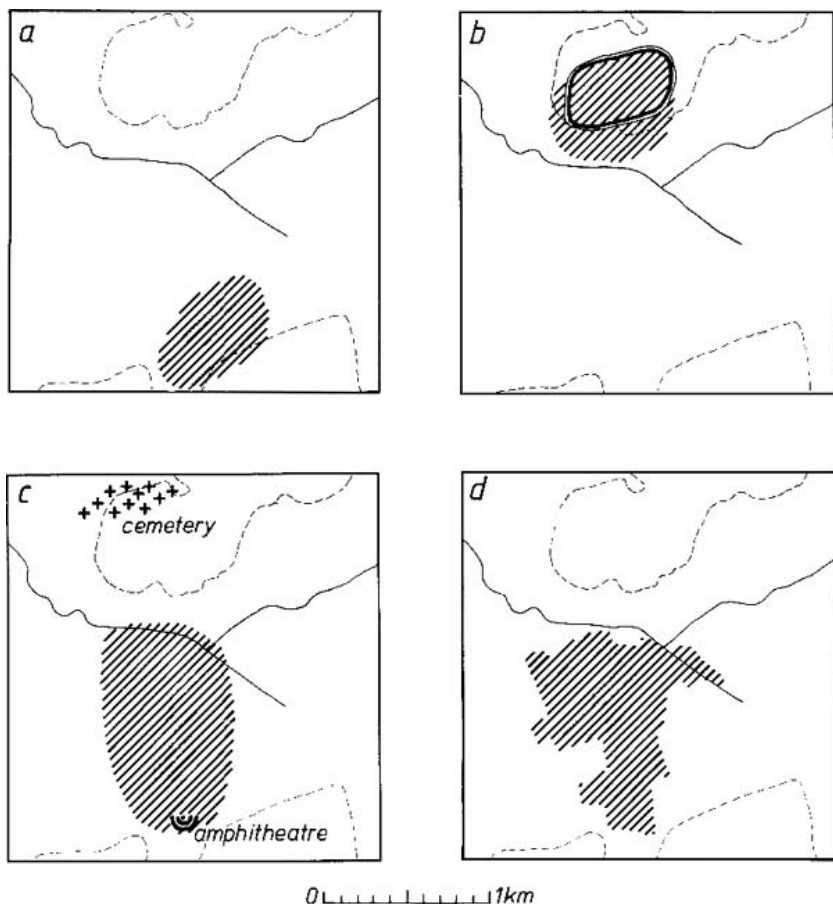


Figure 2.2 Settlement development of Levroux (Indre), France (Collis 1984b)

equivalents of courtyard houses on classical Greek and Roman sites. At the other end of the spectrum are the small timber houses (fig. 2.3) which cluster along the major east-west road at Manching, or along the terraces on a number of Czech sites. These are generally associated with industrial activity, and seem to be the residences of an artisan class specializing in the production of metal objects, textiles and other commodities (figs 2.9 and 2.10). But at Manching there are other sorts of buildings whose function is still unknown, such as the ‘warehouses’, structures up to 30 m (100 ft) long.



Figure 2.3 Examples of house plans from Manching, Bavaria (Collis 1984b)

Britain at the time of the Roman conquest presented a rather different picture. There are *oppida* in the east but, unlike their continental counterparts, they are in low-lying, non-defensive situations defined by vast linear dykes. They also enclose much larger, but only partly occupied, areas: 2,000 ha (5,000 acres) at Colchester, 350 ha (860 acres) at Stanwick, although this may include, as on the Sheepen site at Colchester, an area with an industrial character. At Stanwick the monumental earthworks in places follow pre-existing land boundaries; one interpretation would see these as royal estates controlling key areas, and deliberately imposing in their public works to demonstrate the power of the newly-emerged royal class. In western Britain the hill-forts still predominated. Though they were clearly centres of defence in times of need, as the cemetery of defenders at Maiden Castle demonstrates, it is still a matter of argument to what extent they played a role as 'central places' (for conflicting views see Cunliffe, 1983, 1984; and Collis, 1981). They clearly had central storage facilities for grain, and a permanent population, but evidence for industrial activity is limited and occurs on minor farming settlements and villages as well. There is no evidence that the hill-forts' inhabitants were any wealthier than those on the surrounding farms, if anything the opposite seems to be the case.

These are only a few of the settlement patterns which may have existed at the time of the Roman conquest. It is clear that there was an enormous range, from societies based on small farming settlements with no nucleation (e.g. the Yorkshire Wolds, Dent, 1983) to highly urbanized systems as in central France, though in the latter case the large size of some

of the sites, in comparison with their Roman successors, suggests a fairly undeveloped system with urban sites exercising a monopoly, rather than a more competitive system with secondary and tertiary tiers of urban sites such as are found in the Roman period.

Burial practice and social structure

Up to the middle of the second century BC the dominant burial rite had been inhumation in ‘flat’ cemeteries ([fig. 2.4](#)), though the systematic layout of some cemeteries shows that markers, presumably low mounds, were employed. This burial rite is found from Slovakia and the Hungarian Plain in the east, to Champagne and central France in the west. The women were buried with their jewellery – tore, brooches, bracelets, armlets, finger-rings, belt chain and anklets – although there was considerable regional variation (for instance the presence or absence of a tore, the number of bracelets, and also in the number of grave-goods per grave within a single cemetery). Universally these ornaments were of bronze (only finger-rings might be of gold), and occasionally bracelets of shale (sapropelite) or glass, and beads or inlays of coral or amber. The male graves were usually accompanied by an iron brooch, an armlet, and more rarely by weapons. About a fifth of the male graves had a fairly complete set of weapons: spear, sword, shield, and sometimes a helmet. In absolute terms of wealth the burials are poorer than those of the sixth and fifth centuries, and imply a less socially differentiated society.

In the second century this burial rite starts to disappear, initially in central Europe



Figure 2.4 Distribution of flat, inhumation cemeteries of La Tène B-C (fourth-second centuries BC) (*Collis 1984b*)

(in La Tène C1) and later in western Europe (La Tène C2). At the long-lived cemetery of Münsingen in Switzerland the graves become notably shallower and grave-goods rarer in C2. At Basel, one of the few sites of La Tène D in Switzerland to produce any burials, the cemetery showed little sign of formal layout. Graves often cut one another, and the few grave-goods (brooches and pendants) could only with difficulty be assigned to individual graves. The general pattern, however, from Central Europe to France, is for burial evidence to disappear in La Tène D, and virtually nothing is known of how, for instance, the inhabitants of Manching normally disposed of their dead. This contrasts with what Caesar tells us of the lavish funerals accorded to individuals of rank in Gallic society, and he mentions the burning of letters on pyres, implying that cremation was the norm.

The one exception to this lack of burial evidence is in an east-west zone extending from the central Rhine, through northern France to south-east Britain (*Collis, 1977*). Here cremation was the normal burial rite, in cemeteries which could number several hundreds of burials, as at Wederath or St Albans, though every settlement, both large or small, had its own cemetery. The emphasis in grave-goods was in pottery vessels, and metalwork (brooches, bracelets), and glass bracelets and pendants are rare. Weapons also appear, but are generally confined to continental cemeteries; in Britain only defensive weapons such as shields and corselets are known. Some at least of the continental weapon-graves post-date the Roman conquest when the right to bear weapons became an indication of status.

A small number of graves are much richer. This wealth appears not only

in the number of local grave-goods, especially large numbers of pottery vessels, but also in terms of imported objects – wine *amphorae*, imported Italian pottery, bronze and silver vessels, and occasionally glass. Local prestige goods may include a wagon, silver brooches, a mirror, bronze-bound wooden buckets, and, in two recorded cases, the body was draped in a bearskin. In Britain these burials are associated with the rise of the Catuvellaunian state, and the richest graves from Lexden at Colchester are probably of members of the royal family. Both in Britain and on the continent these rich graves continue after the Roman conquest – for instance Goeblingen-Nospelt in Luxembourg and Stanfordbury in Northamptonshire. Indeed it is often difficult among the poorer graves to distinguish between pre- and post-conquest. With only subtle changes in the character of the grave-goods, for example the appearance of flagons, platters, samian and other artefacts, this burial rite becomes the norm in early Roman times in the northern provinces, and many cemeteries show continuity into the Roman period.

There are dangers in comparing and contrasting the burial rites in two different areas (for example Switzerland with western Germany). Ideology certainly plays a role in the gradual downgrading of the burial in the later phases of such cemeteries as Münsingen; the sword is more rarely disposed of in the funereal context, but more commonly on ritual sites such as the site of La Tène itself. None the less, the burial and settlement evidence combined suggests that social differentiation was becoming more marked during La Tène C and D, a process which did not necessarily halt with the Roman conquest. The royal family of the Catuvellauni may have disappeared, but that of the Iceni and the Atrebates did not. The increasing wealth of the rich burials of the Treveri at Goeblingen-Nospelt in Luxembourg also indicates Roman support for the native élite class in Gaul. The other end of the social spectrum however is less easy to study, and only the documentary evidence suggests that the rise of the élite was accompanied by a suppression of the lower classes, rather than a general rise in material wealth throughout society as a whole.

Production

Between La Tène C and La Tène D there are no obvious technological breakthroughs, either in iron or bronze production, in ceramics, or in any other crafts. In quantitative terms however, there seems to have been an

industrial revolution, most clearly detectable in iron production, as the tons of iron needed for the spikes used in the *murus gallicus* defences, or the quantities of discarded iron tools and nails littering such sites as Manching, eloquently testify. The foundation of the *oppida*, and the nucleation of artisan production paved the way for permanent changes in the mode of production, with the proliferation of full-time craftsmen who were beginning to exercise the freedom of an independent class.

This process is most clearly visible in iron production. From late Hallstatt times raw iron had been traded in the form of 'currency bars', which were turned into finished objects on each settlement. Every hamlet seems to have possessed at least a part-time blacksmith; specialist master craftsmen, however, existed at least for the production of weapons. Although some swords bent on impact, as Polybius sneeringly relates, Livy, Pliny and others tacitly imply that the Mediterranean world had much to learn from the Celtic world, and this finds support in the archaeological record. Already by La Tène C production of swords had begun in Switzerland, by welding thin bars of steel to form composite forged blades the strength and flexibility of which were perhaps only surpassed with the advent of the pattern-welded sword. The blades were etched to show the structure, and stamped as a sign of quality. These stamped swords are widely distributed in Europe, including Britain, though whether through trade or local production is unclear.

In La Tène D the currency bar disappears and the production of finished articles is concentrated on the *oppida*. Some sites, such as the Titelberg in Luxembourg, and some in Czechoslovakia, are sited near, if not actually on, major sources of good quality iron ore. Others such as Manching ([fig. 2.5](#)) made use of poor quality sources such as bog iron, or were importing ore for smelting. Fifty kilometres (30 miles) downstream

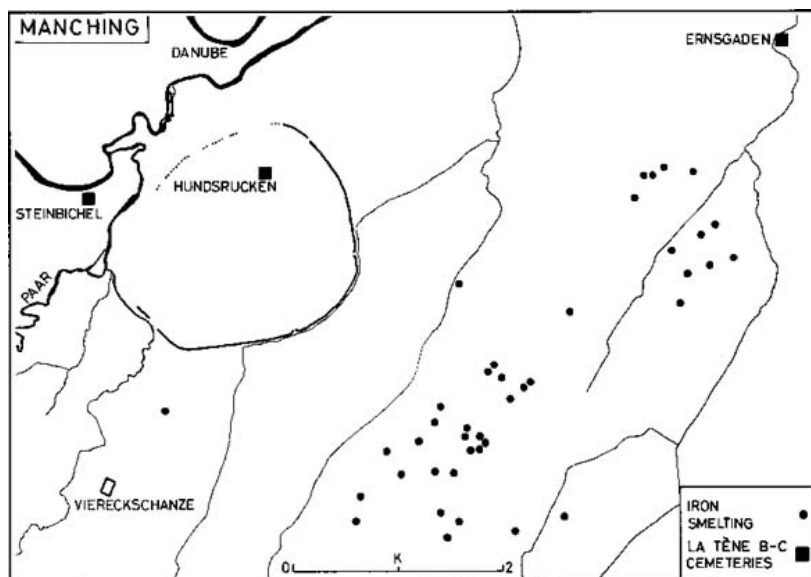


Figure 2.5 Distribution of iron smelting sites around Manching (*Collis 1984b*)

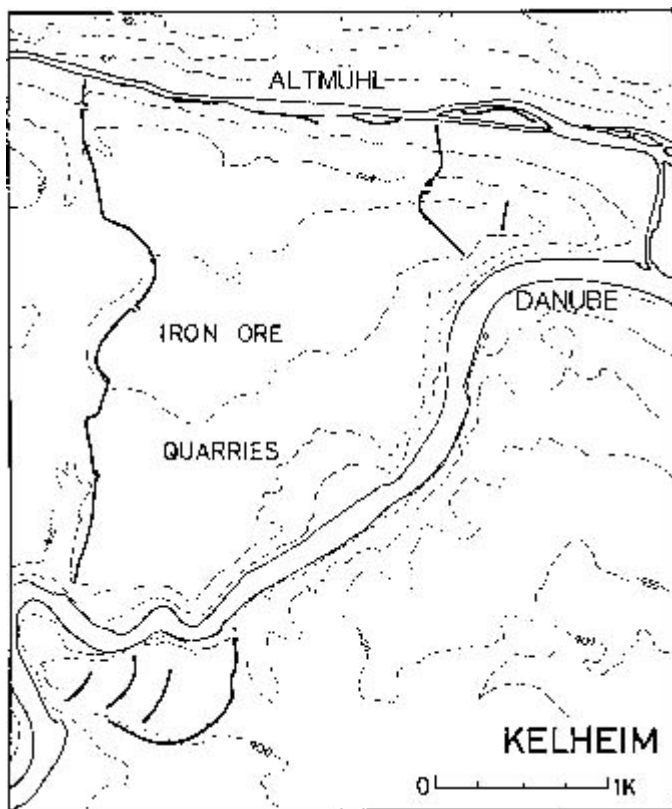


Figure 2.6 The *oppidum* of Kelheim, Bavaria, showing areas of iron quarrying (Collis 1984b)



Figure 2.7 Cooking pot of *Graphittonkeramik* from Manching. Scale 1:4 (Collis 1984b)

from Manching is the huge *oppidum* of Kelheim (fig. 2.6) which seems to have had only a small population, although its interior is riddled with pits for the extraction of ore, which was presumably exported up river to its more populous neighbour.

Manching was also importing graphite clay for its pottery industry, in this case from some 200 km (125 miles) down the Danube at Passau (fig.

2.14). Although sites like Manching, Stradonice or Budapest were producing specialist wares, such as the *Graphittonkeramik* cooking pots (fig. 2.7) or painted wares, both for their hinterland and for other *oppida*, each major settlement may have still been largely self-sufficient in more mundane wares. Plain cordoned wares are common at Manching for jars and eating bowls, but 20 to 25 per cent of the pottery was still hand-made. Some centres may have specialized in fine ware production, such as Roanne which produced painted wares with exciting geometric and zoomorphic designs (fig. 2.8) and later samian production sites such as La Graufesenque and Lezoux started initially with painted wares. One settlement at least, Sissach in Switzerland, was almost wholly dependent on pottery production. In Britain the producers of Gallo-Belgic wares were among the literate class, and were obviously highly-specialized full-time artisans, but entrepreneurial activity and

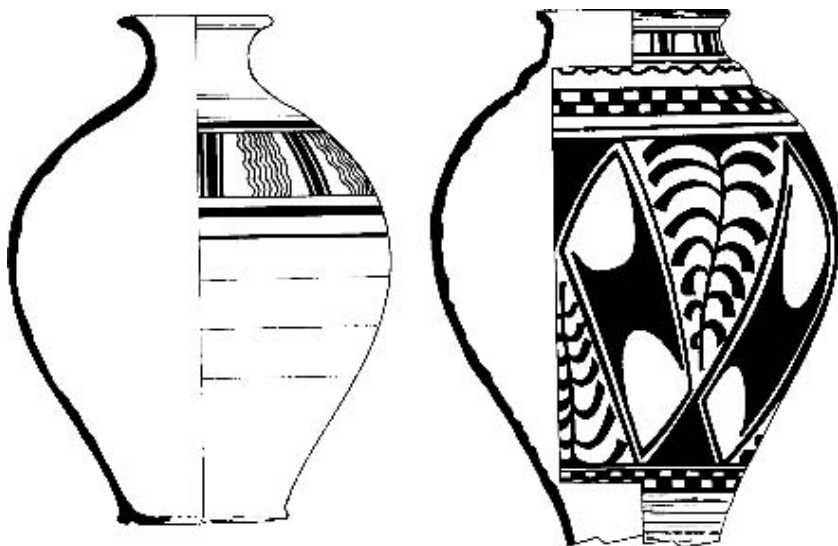


Figure 2.8 Examples of late La Tène painted pottery from: (1) Manching; (2) Aulnat. Scale 1:4 (*Collis 1984b*)

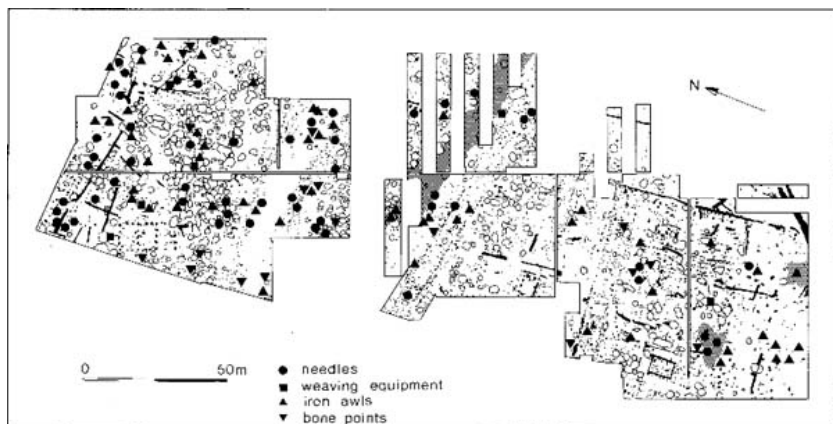


Figure 2.9 Manching: distribution of objects connected with weaving and leatherworking (*Collis 1984b*)

factory production does not appear until the Roman period.

At Manching the enormous range of iron tools indicates the presence of cart-wrights, wheelwrights, leather workers, coopers and specialist metalworkers, and even the traditionally domestic craft of weaving was becoming artisan-based. Indeed the concentration of objects associated with weaving – needles, bone bodkins and occasional shuttles – in the excavated area was centred on the small houses fronting the main street (fig. 2.9). The normally ubiquitous debris from metalworking was notable by its absence in this zone, while industries such as potting were poorly represented in the whole of the excavated area. This hints at a zoning at Manching according to craft specialism, a phenomenon which was often linked with the presence of craft-guilds. Though some production, for instance of coins (fig. 2.10), was concentrated inside the ‘palisaded enclosures’, implying direct control by an élite, the artisan class seemed already to have established its freedom.

On the continent local production concentrated mainly on normal domestic needs: tools and utensils in the case of iron, and simple personal ornaments, such as belt fittings and brooches, and harness. Most was mass-produced, stereotyped and artistically mundane. Production of prestige metalwork, other than weapons, wagon fittings and hearth furniture was non-existent, as though no élite market existed. From the evidence of burials it was the imported Mediterranean goods which largely performed the role of prestige goods. Except for the occasional gold tore or silver brooch, precious metals were virtually exclusively reserved for coin production.

In this respect Britain forms a contrast. Even though Mediterranean

goods were available, and appear in the rich graves, prestige items of high artistic merit were still



Figure 2.10 Manching: distribution of objects connected with bronzeworking and coin manufacture (Collis 1984b)

being produced, not only in the less industrially developed areas of western and northern Britain, but also in the south-east where mass-production in continental style might be expected, and it can only be conjectured that this may be connected with more direct royal involvement in production, from which may also have come the encouragement of Gallo-Belgic potters to move to Britain. The products of the bronze- and goldsmiths of the first century BC/AD represent the climax of prehistoric art in Britain: the whole range of engraved bronze mirrors, the harness and the chariot fittings (all of which types were on occasion exported to the continent), the Battersea shield, the Waterloo Bridge helmet, the gold torcs from Ipswich and Snettisham. Production did not cease at the Roman conquest, as items such as the Aesica brooch demonstrate, but slowly the market dwindled as wealth was turned into bricks and mortar, or into aping or importing Mediterranean tastes.

Coinage

The earliest coins of temperate Europe imitate Greek prototypes (Allen, 1980), in the early phase mainly those of Philip of Macedon: his gold stater in the west and his silver tetradrachm in the east. Later it was the Greek colonies: Rhode, which provided the source of the *monnaies à la croix* of

south-western France, and Marseilles, whose 'charging bull' was used for a large series of lower-value coins in France and Britain. Only rarely, mainly after the Roman conquest of Gaul, were Roman coins imitated. Local designs were also invented, like the *Rolltier* in southern Germany, but these represent a minority.

Early coins are virtually unknown from archaeological contexts, and estimates of the date of their appearance have varied from the fourth to the end of the second century BC, though the consensus is now for an early date contemporary with the originals. The mechanism of their introduction is also a problem. Although coins appear in an economic context in which standardization was increasingly important (for example the production of iron bars in standard sizes), they arrived at a time when trade contact with the Mediterranean was at a minimum. Mercenaries returning from Greek service have been invoked, but this does not explain the transfer of technological skill, as the earliest copies in terms of design and striking are of high technical quality. Economically these early coins would have had little impact; they would have taken their place alongside other prestige goods which were circulating through social and political channels. They seem, however, largely to have ousted other items of gold, such as brooches and finger-rings, and only torcs seem to survive, possibly representing a multiple of the coin, as the two are often found together in hoards.

The next major change was the advent of lower-value coins in the form of silver minims, struck or cast bronze, or cast potin (bronze with up to 25 per cent tin). The date when this happened is also disputed. Archaeological evidence might suggest one as early as the late second century, although, on historical grounds, some numismatists would suggest the Caesarian conquest; certainly the vast majority were produced in the decades after 50 BC. Some are inscribed, though usually with the names of individuals otherwise unknown, so whether these were produced by private nobles as a means of personal prestige, or by magistrates acting on behalf of a state is unclear. Certainly the more common types have distributions which cross tribal boundaries or are equally common in several different tribal areas. Both the reason for their production and their subsequent use remain obscure. They occur commonly on many, though not all, the major *oppida*, suggesting they may have been used in local exchange, perhaps in a market context, a process of economic development which can be charted in Athens on the strength of documentary evidence. To what extent the countryside was using this coinage is also hotly disputed, though the level of coin usage clearly varied from one community to another, and gold and bronze may well have operated in different spheres of exchange.

Inscribed coins, other than those with imitations of Greek inscriptions, are also a late adoption; indeed in some areas they never appeared. In some cases, especially where two names occur, we may be dealing with tribal magistrates. Individuals such as Vercingetorix are known from the writings of Caesar, but his estimation of a person's importance does not seem to equate with the numbers of coins inscribed with their names. Inscriptions became more common after the Roman conquest, and local Gallic coinage was in extensive production and use until ousted by the official bronze coinage of Augustus after 30 BC.

In the cases where we can recognize kings in the inscriptions we are clearly dealing with official state production, for instance in the kingdom of Noricum. The best example is the latest coinage of south-east Britain where Allen (1944) was able to build up a plausible dynastic relationship between various rulers, and to define their respective spheres of influence. But to impose this interpretation on early uninscribed, and even the earlier inscribed, coins when the state and kingship was less developed, is a doubtful procedure.

External trade

After the great climax of trade with the Mediterranean world in Hallstatt D and La Tène A, from 600 to about 350 BC, there is a major hiatus in the occurrence of Mediterranean goods in central Europe, due in part to a shift in Greek trading to the east, and in part to the Gallic incursions into northern Gaul which affected Italian production. This also made the traditional contact with northern Italy less detectable as both there and in central Europe the material culture was very similar, including, for instance, prestige goods decorated in Wadalsheim style.

The renewal of contact in the second century is not as yet readily detectable. This is partly because burial rites were placing less emphasis on grave-goods, partly due to a lack of settlement archaeology for this period, and partly because it is still not possible to distinguish and date early imports. The introduction of coinage shows that contact existed, but so far it is only at Aulnat that early second century imports can be identified, with black slipped 'campanian' pottery and cream *mortaria* turning up in association with a relatively early gold coin.

The next phase lasted until the Caesarian conquest of Gaul. The dominant import, the Dressel la wine *amphora* (fig. 2.12), was in vogue for

about a century, and at present we cannot distinguish between early and late varieties. The fine black-slipped plates and dishes that accompany it are equally insusceptible to precise dating, so the impact of the Roman conquest of southern France, for instance, cannot be judged, nor the stimulus this may have had on trade. Certainly the Romans extended their territory along the major through routes, the Carcassonne gap, over to the headwaters of the Garonne at Toulouse, and along the Rhône to Vienne and Geneva. Strabo tells us that Vienne developed from a village to a metropolis, and, on the borders of the Roman province from 125 to 58 BC, it controlled the routes to the north and north-east along the Rhône and Saône, the land route to the headwaters of the Loire, and so to the Atlantic coast.

During this period the trade grew prodigiously (fig. 2.11). Most sites in central and eastern France produce large quantities of *amphorae*, and the Palais d'Essalois on the Loire, at the end of the land route to Vienne, is littered with fragments. They were

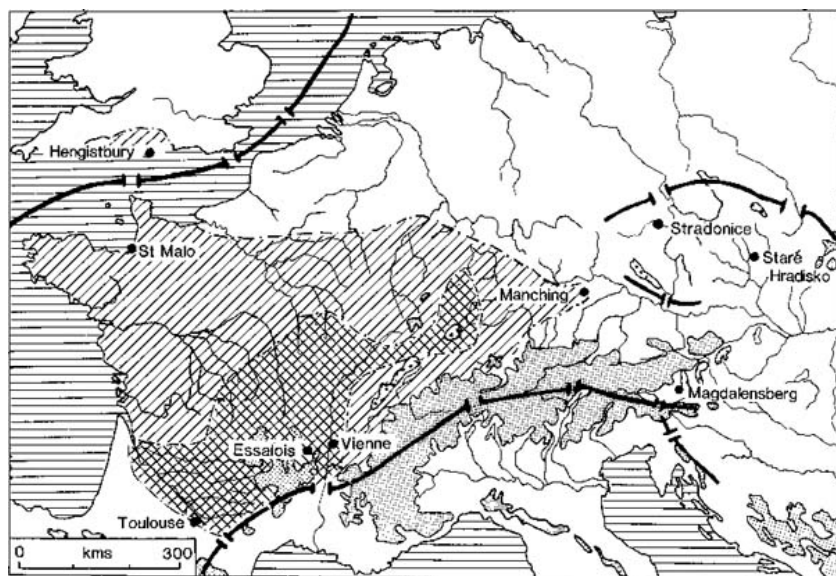


Figure 2.11 Generalized map showing the intensity of trade contact with the Mediterranean world, sites exceptionally rich within their zones, and some physical restrictions to trade routes (Collis 1984b)

reaching northern France and western Germany in some quantity, as well as southern Britain, and more rarely central Europe. Both these *amphorae* and the fine wares were products of the west coast of Italy, and some of the *amphorae* were being manufactured near Pompeii and near Cosa, the two

major ports involved in this trade.

The third main category of Italian exports was bronze vessels, mainly pans and jugs. These have an even wider distribution, occurring in burials in Poland, northern Germany, Britain, and occasionally in Denmark. They are also more common in central Europe, due to the greater ease with which they could be carried over the Alps in comparison with *amphorae*. Some of these finds perhaps date to before 50 BC, but most belong to the period up to 10 BC. This phase is characterized by a larger wine *amphora*, Dressel Ib (fig. 2.12), whose source and distribution is much the same as Ia, except in Britain, where it has a more easterly distribution, due to the decline of Hengistbury Head, and the rise of the East Anglia–Rhine route.

Mediterranean trade seems to have been largely in the hands of Italian merchants, who are mentioned by both Posidonius and Caesar as active in central France and beyond the Rhine, and it is doubtful if any indigenous trading class existed as such at this period. Caesar also notes the presence of Roman commissariats at Orléans (Cenabum) and

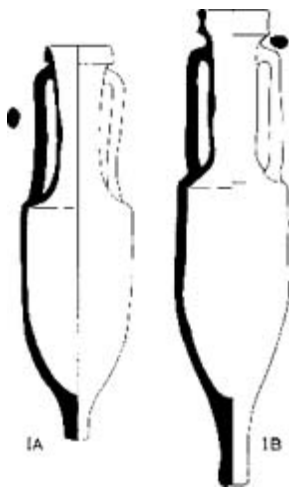


Figure 2.12 Dressel Ia *amphora* (c. 150–50 BC) and Dressel Ib (c. 60–10 BC).
Scale 1:10 (Collis 1984b)

Châlons-sur-Saône (Cabillonum). On the Magdalensberg in Austria, perhaps the ancient Noreia, capital of the kingdom of Noricum, one of the lower terraces formed an Italian merchants' quarter. Their accounts, scribbled on the plaster of their walls, tell of their trading partners and connections in Italy, and in one case, in Volubilis in Mauretania (fig. 2.13). The main product traded from Noricum was iron, which was of superior quality to that made in Italy, and the Norican smiths were able to produce

steel of a consistently high standard. Elsewhere it is the predictable range of products required by a higher civilization from peripheral areas: raw metals, corn and slaves, and Posidonius tells us that an *amphora* of wine could be changed for a slave in central France. In this context the almost annual conflicts, mentioned by Caesar, between the Gallic tribes for control of the trade routes and of the goods to trade become understandable.

Internal trade

The material culture of late La Tène in temperate Europe is very homogeneous, which on the one hand might mean that local self-sufficiency in finished products obviated the need for trade, but on the other that continuous contact existed through which ideas could spread. Traded objects are difficult to identify. Some brooches of foreign types occur at Manching, and central European brooches occur in a burial at Wilanów near Warsaw, but in these cases it is likely that the women who owned them moved with their possessions, and inter-regional marriages are historically documented among the upper classes. Occasionally coins travelled; Gallic coins occur in central Europe and Britain, but not in sufficient quantities to suggest they were more than curiosities,

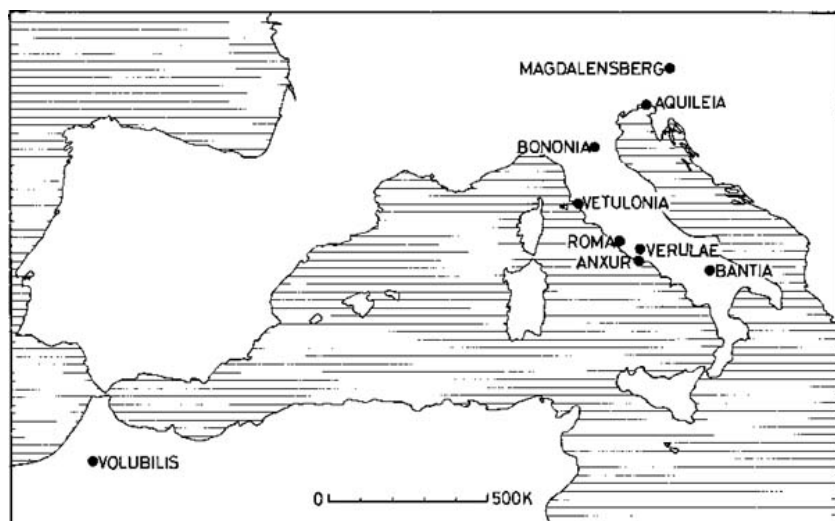


Figure 2.13 Towns mentioned on inscriptions from the traders' quarters on the Magdalensberg, Austria (Collis 1984b)

and they certainly played no part in long-distance trade. Most traded goods,

however, were probably raw materials such as good-quality iron, bronze and salt, and Strabo lists other archaeologically intangible items such as linen and salted pork.

Pottery was certainly traded, but is poorly documented due in part to the limited research programmes of the German and central European schools of archaeology. The one distinctive product on which we have information is the *Graphittonkeramik* cooking pots whose clay was chosen for its high conductivity and its heat resistance (fig. 2.7). The sources are limited: around Passau on the German/Austrian border, near Český Budějovice in southern Bohemia, and a number of small deposits in Moravia. Centres such as Budapest, Manching and Hallstatt were importing the raw clay and manufacturing cooking pots, which commonly reached as far as the German Mittelgebirge, southern Poland and Romania, and individual vessels could move several hundred kilometres, to Aquileia on the Adriatic or Aulnat in central France (fig. 2.14).

Whether other specialized wares like the painted pottery travelled similar distances we do not know. If Stradonice was the only production centre in Bohemia, its products were travelling up to 100 km (60 miles), but not in any great quantities. In Britain fine decorated pottery made from the gabbroic clays on the Lizard was moving greater distances, up to 150 km (95 miles), but neolithic pottery from the same source had had a similar distribution three millennia before. Unfortunately the one case of distinctive

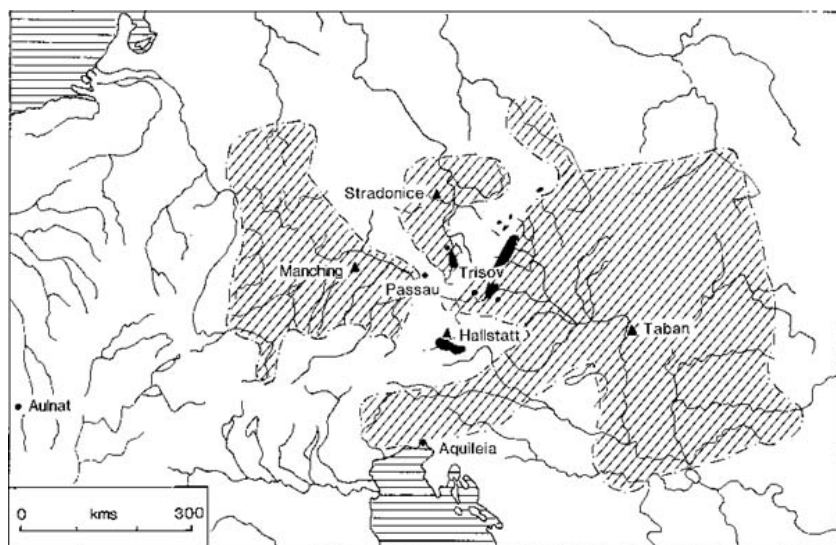


Figure 2.14 Distribution map of *Graphittonkeramik* (Collis 1984b)

pottery manufactured in Britain, the butt beakers and other Gallo-Belgic wares produced at Colchester, are at present impossible to distinguish from their Roman successors, though possibly pre-conquest finds come from the Humber estuary and central Hampshire.

The Colchester trade network is informative because we have a number of goods which have a source definitely in the area. The bronze coins struck there are mainly found in the *oppidum* itself, and only form a small percentage of the coins found at other sites such as St Albans. A second zone can be defined in which Roman imports occur such as amphorae, samian and other luxury items which presumably reached Britain through Colchester. They have a radius of about 60–70 km (35–45 miles). Gold coins from Colchester also circulated in this area, but also beyond in an arc of 140–150 km (85–95 miles) in the Thames valley. A further zone is defined by the fine Gallo-Belgic pottery already discussed. Both the zoning and the contexts in which these goods appear (for example the imports in rich burials) imply different trade mechanisms. Some are clearly upper-class luxuries which were obtained by direct personal contact with the centre; the fine pottery indicates indirect contact, perhaps ‘down-the-line’, or redistribution from sites on the periphery of the main area of Colchester's influence. Goods in the *oppidum* itself may in part have circulated through some limited form of market exchange. Certainly the system was complex, but was probably less developed than those of central France which have still to be analysed.

Religious and ceremonial sites

The construction of special sites and buildings for cult or ceremonial purposes had been a major feature of the neolithic and early bronze age, but in the millennium or so up to the second century BC such sites have rarely been identified and they seem generally to have had no role to play within late bronze age and early iron age society. In certain areas the increase of hoards and river finds may indicate deliberate destruction of wealth in either a social (such as potlatch) or religious context, but most ritual probably took place in the everyday settlement context, which only large-scale excavations might start to identify. The rare exceptions, such as Dun Ailinne, the Navan Fort, the Golring and Libenice, prove the rule.

The first widespread appearance of cult sites is in the second century BC: the so-called *Viereckschanzen* of southern Germany. The most

extensively excavated is Holzhausen in Bavaria (fig. 2.15). The basic characteristics are a small square wooden temple in one corner of a square enclosure with wooden palisade, later replaced by a bank and ditch. A number of shafts up to 30 m (100 ft) deep were found cut into the loose gravel, two with standing posts at the bottom, surrounded by organic deposits, perhaps from meat and plant offerings. At various places in the interior fires had been built. Ritual shafts have also been found at Tomerdingen and Fellbach-Schmiden, the latter containing wooden cult figures. In Bavaria the density of sites suggests virtually every settlement possessed a *Viereckschanze*, though they were apparently constructed in woodland away from occupation areas. However, elsewhere in Bohemia for instance, they form part of a settlement, although only a few sites had enclosures. The later *Viereckschanze* at Gosbecks Farm, within the dyked enclosures at Colchester, was more of a tribal focus.

In Britain small square or rectangular buildings like those at Holzhausen are known on several settlement sites, in hill forts such as South Cadbury and Danebury, or in open settlements like Heath Row, perhaps appearing as early as the fifth century BC. In all these cases it is mainly the contrast of the ground plan with the normal domestic round-houses that distinguishes them, rather than any associated finds, and it is not surprising that continental equivalents, for instance in the urban *oppida* where rectangular houses are the norm, have not been identified. In France and Britain there are rural sites which continued in use into Roman times when formal stone buildings, sculptures and inscriptions appear. In some cases wooden buildings preceded those of stone, as at Hayling Island, and Tremblois; in others there are only spreads of offerings such as coins and personal ornaments as at Allones and Harlow, but no environmental work

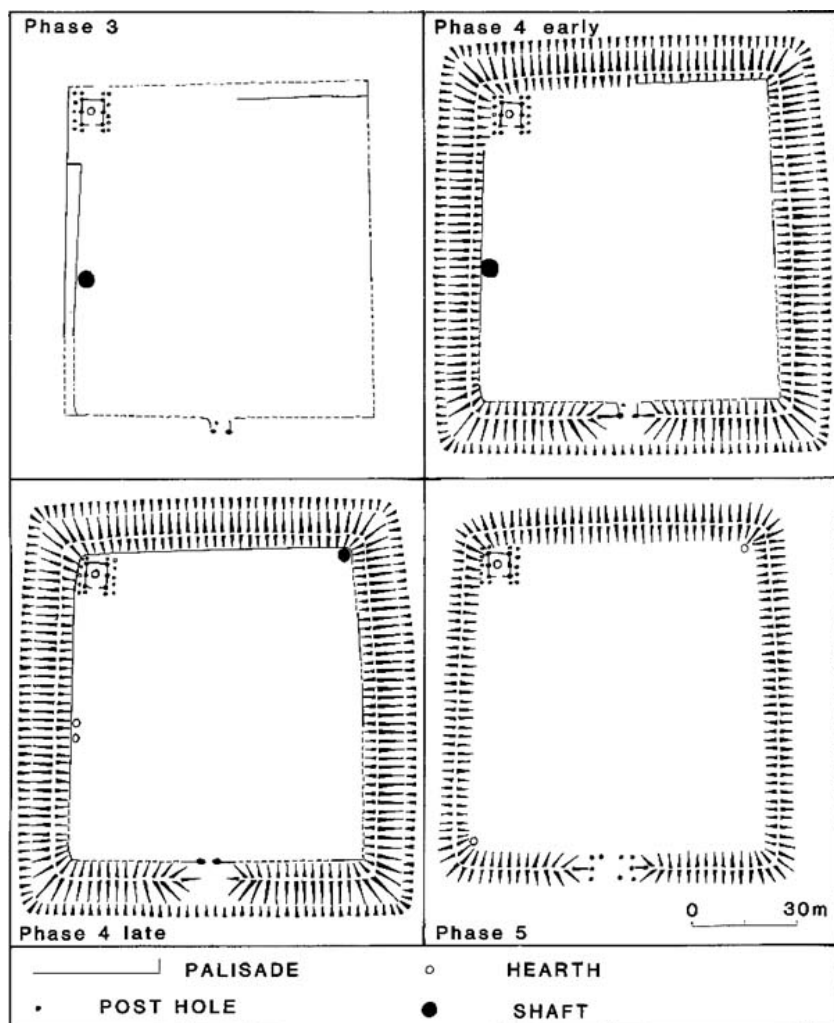


Figure 2.15 Development of Holzhausen

has been attempted to show, for instance, if there were groves of trees. Votive offerings could include weapons, as at Gournay-sur-Arondé, or miniature shields and swords, at Frilford and Worth, and river or marsh deposits of weapons are encountered, such as at La Tène, Hjortsprung, Llyn Cerrig Bach, or the historically documented Toulouse. At Gournay there were also human and animal bones while, beneath the great Gallo-Roman temple complex of Ribemont-sur-Ancre, there was a timber-framed enclosure retaining a heap of some 500 human femurs.

Why the second to first centuries BC should see this upsurge in formal

religious sites is unclear, but it laid the foundation for religious practice in the western Roman provinces. It seems not to be connected with producing tribal or state cohesiveness (Gournay and Ribemont may be exceptions). The meagre historical sources and Roman activity suggest it was a personal, individual matter, but also the mention by Caesar of national convocations of the druids shows that religion could transcend state and tribal organization as did religion in the Greek world.

Epilogue

Even before the Roman Empire expanded to incorporate the Celtic societies here described, they were already under threat, if not exterminated. By the time Tiberius conquered southern Germany in 15–14 BC, Manching had been deserted for a generation or more, though how and precisely when this happened is still unclear. What little archaeology we have from the area to fill the gap between Manching and the Roman period suggests a culture of more northern origin. Certainly, at about the middle of the first century BC, burials of Germanic type had appeared fleetingly in Hesse, to return in force by the end of the century. By the decade 20–10 BC the last of the *oppida* in the Mittelgebirge had disappeared, and about the same time, possibly even earlier, the Czech sites were abandoned, in two cases, Hrazany and Závist, after their gates had been hurriedly reinforced and then burnt. Urban life was receding north of the Danube and east of the Rhine. By the time of Tacitus all these areas were inhabited by the Germani, who possessed no towns.

In the areas conquered by Rome, native life was often undisturbed for a generation or two after the conquest, indeed archaeologically it is often difficult to detect the conquest on native sites. The traditional division between Iron Age and Roman is in fact meaningless. Subsequent Roman developments throw much light on the less well documented Iron Age, while the Roman period is incomprehensible without an understanding of native society. It is not a question of whether one tribe or another was pro or anti-Roman at the time of the conquest. What happened subsequently, and how quickly an area became romanized, is more connected with the pre-existing social structure, political and economic organization, and systems of land tenure. It has even been suggested that it was the structure of native society in adjacent areas, rather than the failings of the Roman army, which finally defined the limits of the Roman Empire, due to the inability of

simple social systems to adapt to the Mediterranean model imposed by Rome.

· HELLENISTIC · · INFLUENCE · ON · · THE · ROMAN · WORLD ·

Keith Branigan

When Heraclides Ponticus described the Rome captured by the Gauls in 390 BC as a ‘Greek’ city, he probably raised far fewer eyebrows amongst his contemporaries than he does amongst ancient historians and archaeologists today. By the beginning of the fourth century, Rome had been subjected for some three centuries to the influences of Greek culture. Situated between Magna Graecia – the Greek colonial city states of southern Italy and Sicily – and the Etruscan cities to the north, Rome had inevitably received the impulses of both the truly Greek culture of the colonial cities and of the much modified and adapted Greek influences found in the Etruscan cities. The Etruscans exercised the greater and more immediate influence, by reason both of the proximity of the Etruscan heartland and the political domination which they exercised over affairs in Etruria and Latium, even after their kings were driven from Rome at the end of the fifth century BC.

The Etruscans acquired Greek vases and bronzes, and certainly employed Greek painters in cities such as Cerveteri in the sixth century BC. At the Etruscan port of Gravisca, Etruscans and Greek colonists lived alongside one another throughout the sixth century. The effect of both imported goods and imported artists and traders can be seen on contemporary Etruscan statuary, sculptured sarcophagi (pl. 3.1) and the repertoire of the Etruscan tomb painters. Though still little is known of Rome in the sixth and fifth centuries, it is certain that these modified artistic influences reached into the city, and indeed the last Etruscan king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus, is known to have brought artists from Veii to

decorate the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. In the long term, however, the more significant contributions of the Etruscans in introducing Greek ways to the Romans may be judged to be the growing of vines and olives (Potter, 1979, 126), and the use of the alphabet. Though they are of no concern here, it should not be forgotten either that Rome benefited from Etruscan skills, such as hydraulic engineering, which owed little or nothing to the Greeks.

Although the Greek colonies of southern Italy and Sicily were mostly founded between the eighth and the sixth centuries BC, their influences on Rome were probably only directly felt after the eclipse of Etruscan power further north in the fifth century BC. Vast quantities of imported vases (pl. 3.2), bronzes and other goods from Greece found their way into Etruscan cities, and in small quantities perhaps into Rome itself, but initially there was little direct contact between the city-states and Rome. Only as Rome began to exert control over the country to the south of it, and the Greek colonies began to feel the threat of the hill peoples from the Apennines, did mutual interests drive Greeks and Romans into closer contacts. In the course of the fourth century, the Romans came to know cities such as Naples (Neapolis), Paestum (Poseidonia), and Heraclea, with their orthogonal planning which was to be developed in modified form in early Roman colonies such as Cosa founded in 273 BC. In these and other cities they came into contact not only with imported Greek works of art, and locally-produced ones too, but with Greek ideas and ideals. These same cities had spawned their own philosophers and poets from an early period of their history but from the fifth century onwards Greek philosophers, poets, historians and authors from Greece itself, had been frequent visitors to the cities of Magna Graecia. Aeschylus had died at Gela, Herodotus had been amongst the founders of Thurii, and Plato made several visits to both Sicily and the peninsula. The cities of Magna Graecia were an integral part of the Greek world, and in establishing relations with those cities, Rome was entering that world herself.

But she was entering it at a time when the nature of that world was itself about to change dramatically. The Greek influences exerted on the Etruscans, and through them on Rome, had been the influences of classical Greece. By the end of the fourth century, not only Magna Graecia but the whole of the central and east Mediterranean had been dragged into the very different world of Hellenistic Greece by the conquests of Philip of Macedon and his son, Alexander the Great. In particular, the conquest of the east by Alexander had opened up Greek culture itself to new and vital impulses from the near east, which were first assimilated and then soon

passed on to the Greek colonies of southern Italy. Thus, the Greek influences which exerted themselves so strongly on republican Rome in the third to first centuries BC were quite different from those which had been felt much more weakly in the preceding three centuries. They were the influences of Hellenistic Greece, and they were at once more vigorous and more moribund than those of the classical era. To understand not only their nature, but the manner in which they were so rapidly and deeply absorbed by Republican Rome, it is necessary to trace, albeit briefly, Rome's increasing political involvement both with Magna Graecia and eventually with Greece itself.

Initially, relations were more commercial than political. Rome's increasing interest in trade with the Greek cities was marked first by a treaty with Carthage (in 348 BC) guaranteeing her Sicilian commerce, and then in 306 and 303 with the Rhodians and the Tarentines respectively. The fact that meantime she had captured the Greek colony of Neapolis in 326 BC, far from souring her new friendships in Magna Graecia only strengthened them. The colony of Cumae had fallen to the Samnites in 421 BC, and Poseidonia to the Lucanians about twenty years later; Rome's capture of Neapolis was seen as providing the Greek population and their trading interests with protection from the hill-tribes of southern-central Italy. When Rome did eventually fall out with one of the Greek colonies, Tarentum, it was possibly for commercial reasons alone, the Tarentines accusing Rome of breaking their existing treaty. The Hellenistic army led by Pyrrhus of Epirus, which penetrated as far north as Praeneste in 280 BC, received scant support from the Greek cities of the peninsula and was forced to withdraw south. When, following his Sicilian adventure, Pyrrhus was defeated by the Romans in 275, Rome was seen to have assumed the role not of conqueror but protector of Magna Graecia. Her victory certainly brought her into a closer and more direct contact with Greek – or rather Hellenistic – culture than ever before, symbolically marked by the display of statuary and other works of art at the triumph which marked the capture of Tarentum.

Only ten years later her protective role, and a mixture of commercial and political considerations, led Rome a step further into the Hellenistic world as she sent an army into Sicily against the Carthaginians. The successful conclusion of the first Punic War in 241 BC left Rome with an enhanced role in the west Mediterranean and in ever closer involvement with a growing number of Greek colonies. Soon, the involvement extended to Greece itself as Rome, anxious to protect her or her allies' shipping in the Adriatic took steps to put down the troublesome Illyrian pirates. The

Illyrians received the support of Macedon, which feared the long-term threat posed by Roman intervention on the east side of the Adriatic, but when Rome defeated the pirates in 229–8 it was a victory welcomed by most Greek states. Corinth, indeed, went to the unusual length of formally admitting Roman citizens to the Isthmian games. Further hostilities between Rome and the Illyrians took place in 219, and after the second Punic War broke out in 218 BC Philip V of Macedon determined to ally himself with Carthage; in turn this led Rome openly to back the Greek cities opposed to Macedon, resulting in the first Macedonian War (215–205). The second Punic War undoubtedly had a profound effect on Roman attitudes, though whether it dramatically altered her approach to Greek culture as some would claim (Grimal, 1960, 66) is less certain. But Rome emerged from the war the undisputed master of the west Mediterranean, immensely more confident of her own power, and more aware of her traditional values. She was able to brush the Macedonians aside in a second war between 200 and 196. In particular, the defeat of the Macedonians at Cynoscephalae in 197 at once destroyed any possible threat to northern Italy, secured Roman trading interests and shipping in the Adriatic, and extended Roman protection and support to the states of central and southern Greece. The defeat of Macedon and the warning handed out to Antiochus of Syria to respect the freedom of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, contrasts notably with the treatment of the Greek states. Whilst the powerful Hellenistic monarchies were met by the uncompromising face of the post-Hannibalic Rome, the Greek states were treated with great favour. So favourably in fact that when the Roman envoy to the Isthmian games of 196 announced that Rome was restoring freedom, with no tributes and no garrisons, to the states of Greece, the Greeks literally did not believe their ears and asked him to repeat the announcement. The Romans subsequently underlined their commitment to the Greeks by driving the forces of Antiochus out of Greece in 191, and by overthrowing him at the battle of Magnesia in 189. All indications are that at this point the Romans were just as anxious to support and protect the states which had been at the heart of classical Greece as they were determined to remove the threat of the Hellenistic monarchies of the east.

But as first the Aetolian and then the Achaean league proved troublesome, political disenchantment set in on both sides. A revival of Macedonian power was thwarted by a third war which saw the defeat of Macedon in 168 at Pydna, and by a fourth and final war in 149 which ended with Macedon a Roman province. Only two years later the manhandling of a Roman deputation to Corinth so incensed the Romans

that the army in Macedon marched south and besieged the city. When it fell, its art treasures were removed to Rome, its citizens sold into slavery, and its finest buildings destroyed as the city was razed to the ground. It might be supposed that the symbiosis between Greece and Rome was destroyed at the same time, and yet of course that was far from true, as will be seen. Equally Rome's military and political involvement with the Greeks did not end in 146, for she continued to expand eastwards and in so doing to absorb the influential Hellenistic kingdoms of the east Mediterranean.

Initially, the hellenization of Roman Italy had expressed itself in material culture, and was achieved largely by material acquisitions. The works of art removed from Tarentum in 272 were followed by 2,000 statues carried off from Volsinii in 265, and by a veritable flood of Greek art after the capture of Syracuse in 211 ([Part 9, Chapter 29](#)). In the second century, Greece itself provided the spoils. Marcus Fulvius' Greek campaigns were celebrated by a Triumph at which 785 bronze and 250 marble statues were displayed, and by games at which Greek performers and athletes were the stars. The second and third Macedonian Wars were each followed by further large shipments of Greek art treasures to Rome, where the appetite for them seemed insatiable. Greek statues adorned the gardens and homes of the wealthy, and Greek silverware became a common feature of Roman dining tables. Yet such was the quantity available, that in 142 Mummius was able to present looted Greek art works to Roman communities not only elsewhere in Italy but in Spain too. The demand continued until the end of the Republic, and indeed beyond it, and more than once we find Cicero ([pl. 3.3](#)) writing letters begging, urgently, for still more Greek statuary to be despatched to him. Elsewhere, he notes that the town house of Chrysogonus on the Palatine is 'crammed with gold and silver vessels from Delos and Corinth' (*Pro Roscio*, xiv, 33). Surveying both the historical and the artefactual evidence for the wholesale looting of Greek art treasures first from Magna Graecia and then from Greece itself, it would indeed be easy to come to the conclusion that the 'hellenization' of Rome was no more than a thin cultural veneer, with no lasting significance for, or impact on, either Roman history or Roman society. Such a view cannot, of course, be sustained.

Even in the field of art itself, the Romans borrowed and imitated, and in time adapted, modified and transformed Greek ideas, styles and techniques. Some of their earliest borrowings may have been in paintings and relief sculptures rather than sculpture in the round. The painted battle scenes recording the victories over Carthage in 264 and 202, and against Antiochus in 189, are thought to have owed their inspiration to the work of

Aristides of Thebes, a painter much admired by Romans and quite possibly the painter of the famous scene of Alexander at the Battle of Issus, surviving in the form of a mosaic copy from Pompeii. One of the first Roman battle reliefs, standing ancestral to those which later recorded imperial campaigns, was set up not in Rome but at Delphi by L. Aemilius Paulus in 168 BC; significantly, as Wheeler notes (1964, 174) the relief is 'an essentially conventional battle scene in the Greek heroic tradition'. Again, it is to Hellenistic Greece, and more particularly the kingdom of Pergamum, that Wheeler looks for the intermediate inspiration for the 'continuous style' of relief sculpture which was subsequently moulded by imperial sculptors into such a potent propaganda technique for Trajan. Certainly, as Hellenistic sculptors moved increasingly away from the classical search for the ideal and towards a greater realism (pl. 3.4), so they came closer to Roman preferences. Inevitably, Pergamene and other sculptors followed in the wake of the shiploads of sculptures, vases and metalwork and were employed by Roman patrons to produce new masterpieces in Rome itself. At the same time, the demand for the works of classical sculptors reached such heights that the 'free copies' of the second century BC were replaced in the early first century by accurate copies produced by the pointing process, which allowed reproductions to be produced in greater numbers at greater speed. The Greek influences on Roman art were thus a conflicting mixture of classical and Hellenistic, to which were added the impulses still received from indigenous Italic art and late Etruscan sculpture. From this melting-pot of ideals and styles there emerged in the first century BC the new Roman school of portraiture in which realism was the dominant theme. It is impossible realistically to assess the relative value and importance of the various influences and styles which contributed to the development of Roman portraiture. The importance of the Etruscan input is often emphasized, yet it is difficult to deny a significant Hellenistic contribution. Indeed, Scullard (1959, 198) has made the important point that many of these portraits were actually sculpted by Greek artists, coming from a Hellenistic tradition which had already embraced verism, and he concludes that Roman portraiture 'may have arisen from Greek sculptors responding to the demand for realistic portraits from their Roman patrons'. If the Greek contribution is as significant as Scullard suggests, then the ultimate force of Greek influences in Roman art was formidable, and the ultimate product – Roman portraiture – was one of just and lasting renown.

The architectural environments for which the sculptures, reliefs, mosaics and paintings were created, whether private homes or public buildings,

were similarly the products of the interplay between Greek invention and elegance, and Roman application and monumental vision. Sharing with the Greeks the concept of the city as the political and social focus of their civilization, the Romans founded new cities in Italy and in the provinces. The orthogonal planning of the Greek colonies was noted and adapted, and indeed the new towns were laid out by surveyors who if not Greek themselves used the methods and techniques of the Greeks, and equipment of Ionian and Alexandrian origin. Within the towns, old and new, rose buildings which truly represent a symbiosis of Greek and Roman genius. Hellenistic architects had invented the timber truss, but had used it only sparingly; they had experimented with barrel vaults and arches, but on a limited scale (Brown, 1968, 19). The Romans took both, and together with their development of concrete, they used and exploited these inventions to the full. Enthusiastically adopting the Hellenistic colonnade, they were able to create by a visionary blend of all these elements, monumental buildings such as the forums and basilicas, the great baths, the theatres, circuses and amphitheatres which were the hallmark of Roman civilization in towns and cities throughout the Empire. In both form and concept most of these structures were themselves of Greek origin – the theatre, the forum (*agora*), the basilica, the stadium and the temple were all to be found in classical and Hellenistic Greece. The Romans modified their form, inflated their scale, and embellished their facades, all through the imaginative use of the truss, the vault, the arch, the colonnade and, of course, concrete. They thus devised grandiose and formalized stage-sets for public and state spectacles which firmly embedded ‘the spectacle’ as an institution in the Roman way of life. The inspiration for developing public spectacles may have come from the Hellenistic kingdoms of the east Mediterranean, where they were both popular and famous, certainly it was not to be found in classical Greece. Yet far removed as Roman spectacle may have been from the vision of the Greek architects and engineers who pioneered the forms and devices so boldly adopted and employed by the Romans, the Greek contribution to imperial Roman architecture can hardly be ignored.

Just as, in adopting the Greek theatre building, the Romans modified it, so in absorbing Greek drama they gradually transformed first its content and then its form. Until the mid-third century, Greek drama had been known to the Romans only at a distance and largely through the tantalizing ‘snapshots’ seen on Campanian vases of the fourth century. The campaigns in Magna Graecia brought Romans into direct contact with theatres and drama, and at the Roman Festival of 240 BC Latin versions of a Greek tragedy and a Greek comedy (pl. 3.5) were performed. Their author, Livius

Andronicus, was himself a freedman of Greek origin, and we know that he wrote several tragedies, all inspired by the drama of classical Greece. His contemporary, Naevius, was already seeking to change the content of the plays, writing comedies on Roman subjects as well as providing Latin versions of Greek plays. A generation later, Plautus promoted the 'New Comedy', developed in fourth-century Athens, and in a series of brilliant comedies popularized a form of drama in which the comparative laxity of Greek morality was paraded before Roman audiences. Following in his footsteps, Terence, in the mid-second century, was both more ambitious in his objectives and more Hellenized in his style and presentation. Yet contemporary with Terence's successes there developed a new, patently Italian genre, the *togata*, in which, despite an obvious debt to New Comedy, the settings, the costumes and the character were Roman rather than Greek. More significantly, the moral tone of some of these plays was more nearly in tune with the traditional values of Roman society. Paradoxically, the development and popularity of the *togata* was balanced in the last years of the Republic by the growing popularity of two other forms of theatre, the one indigenous, the other borrowed originally from the Greeks, both of which showed scant respect for dignity, tradition or morality. The Atellane farces, originating under Greek influence in Campania, was popular by reason of its stock 'characters' and its flirtations with obscenity. Mime, immensely popular in the Greek cities of southern Italy, increasingly appealed to Roman audiences and together with Atellane farce retained its popular following throughout the imperial period. Though both forms owed their roots to Greek theatre, by the end of the Republic they were the least Greek, and most popular, of all Roman drama; those forms of Roman theatre which owed most to the Greek tradition found an equally appreciative but much smaller audience in imperial Rome.

It was this same audience which enjoyed Greek poetry and provided the readership for the great Latin poets of the late Republican era. Like Greek drama, Homer was first translated into Latin in the third century BC by Livius Andronicus. Both he, and his fellow playwright and poet Naevius, wrote in the old Italian measure known as Saturnian. It was left to Ennius, in the early second century, to revolutionize Latin poetry by adopting Greek hexameter to replace the Saturnian measure. Henceforth all Latin poetry was clearly greatly indebted to Greek, but important as the adoption of hexameter was, it was only a part of the total Greek influence which can be clearly detected in the work of the late Republican and early imperial poets. The 116 extant poems of Catullus betray the inspiration of both Sappho and of Alexandrian poetry; the poetry of Lucretius was dominated

by the philosophy of Epicurus ([pl. 3.6](#)). Horace, too, was an Epicurean who found in the Aeolian poets, the inspiration to create a new Latin genre – lyric poetry. As for Virgil, the greatest of the Latin poets, in each of his periods of poetic development he revealed his indebtedness to Greece. His *Eclogues* was modelled on the *Idylls* of the Sicilian Greek, Theocritus; his *Georgics* was influenced by Hesiod, and his great epic, the *Aeneid*, was of course inspired by Homer. To trace the Greek influence in the work of these four great poets is not to deny or lessen their Latin genius, but rather to identify the stimuli which brought the genius to its fruition.

The Epicureanism which Lucretius promoted and which flavoured the works of both Horace and Virgil, was in conflict with the other dominant Hellenistic philosophy – Stoicism – during the late Republic. Cicero complained that Epicureanism had the whole of Italy in its grip, and certainly it found favour with influential politicians such as Cassius and Caesar as well as amongst the readers of Lucretius and Horace. But Cicero himself was successful in popularizing a modified Stoicism, the appeal of which survived into the age of Marcus Aurelius, and which was certainly flourishing in the first century BC. The rival philosophies had taken hold in Rome in the second century BC, when they were still relatively new and evolving themselves. Epicurus had died in 271 and Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, probably in 261 BC. Epicureanism, with its belief in individualism and self-expression and its firm materialism, inevitably appealed to some elements in a second-century Rome where old traditions and values were being abandoned and new horizons of pleasure were being explored. In such an environment it was equally certain that Stoicism's exhortations to virtue and temperance would find favour with those, led by the elder Cato ([pl. 3.8](#)), who sought to protect Roman traditions. The cause of Stoicism was revived and popularized in the later second century by the tempered teachings of Panaetius of Rhodes. A close associate of the younger Scipio, with whom he lived for two years, Panaetius taught that each man should recognize and fulfil his own potential; as for virtue, it was sufficient that a man should seek progress towards it. These modifications to the philosophy of Zeno ([pl. 3.7](#)) enabled Stoicism to compete successfully with Epicureanism in the days of the late Republic, with important political and social consequences. In the absence of any significant Roman contribution to philosophy, it was inevitable that these dominant schools in Greek thought should exercise such sway in late Republican Rome. Yet it should also be recognized that the political importance of these – and other – schools of Greek philosophy was not that they *changed* the political views of the Romans who adopted them, but

rather that they bolstered and sustained those views.

The widespread adoption of Greek philosophy, as well as Greek literature, theatre, and the arts, was much encouraged and stimulated by the changing pattern of Roman education, which was itself heavily influenced by Greek practice. From the third century BC onwards, it was normal for the children of senatorial families not only to learn the Greek language but to read Greek literature as a major part of their secondary education. Greek teachers and philosophers found ready patronage in second-century Rome. A School of Greek declamation was established there in 161, and Aemilius PauUus and Tiberius Gracchus were but two of Rome's leading figures who employed Greeks to teach their children. It is particularly significant that after his victory at Pydna in 168, Paullus took no booty, save the 20,000 volumes in the library of the royal palace of Macedon, intended for his sons. It was shortly after this that the visit to Rome of the three Hellenistic philosophers Carneades, Diogenes and Critolaus, fired Rome with a passion for rhetoric. In time rhetoric joined philosophy as one of the two principal ingredients in the final stages of Roman education. It could be learnt in Rome, but such Roman schools of rhetoric as existed, were but imitations of those found in Hellenistic Greece and the east. It became increasingly common for young Romans to spend a year in Athens, for example, to conclude their formal education. Caesar and Cicero both studied rhetoric in Rhodes, and by the end of the Republic rhetoric was regarded not only as a respectable, but as an essential, education for any Roman intending to enter public life. 'Not until the invention of radio was oratory to have such scope as in the Roman republic' (Wilkinson, 1975, 19). Yet for a time, in the mid-second century BC, both the teaching of rhetoric and some other aspects of Greek education had met vigorous opposition from some elements of Roman society. The elder Cato ([pl. 3.8](#)) led a campaign against the rhetoricians and Epicureans, and Scipio the younger was appalled by the popularity of Greek-inspired schools of singing and dancing.

The crusade against the Hellenization of Rome headed by Cato was fired by a genuine, and not entirely misplaced, concern for the effect which the influx of things Greek would have on Roman society. Livy records how Cato railed against the flood of imported art works as early as 195 BC:

I fear that those things will capture us rather than we them. Like a hostile army were statues brought from Syracuse to this city. Already I hear too many people praising and admiring the artistry of Corinth and Athens, and laughing at the traditional terracottas of our Roman temples.

Under his leadership there was certainly a reaction to the excesses of second-century philhellenism. The persecution of the Bacchanalians (inspired by the Dionysiac cult) in 186 was both widespread and harsh, and it was followed in 182 and 161 by senate-imposed restrictions on first the size and then the cost of private drinking parties. Meanwhile, as censor in 184, Cato had imposed taxes on imported luxuries (Wilkinson, 1975, 52). The attacks on the more obvious physical excesses were followed by attempts to silence, or at least diminish the influence of, the Hellenistic philosophers and rhetoricians. In 173 and 161 they were expelled from Rome, and when Carneades and Diogenes arrived in 155, Cato ensured they were moved on as quickly as their popularity allowed. There was too a determination in some quarters to prevent the Greek language from gradually usurping the role of Latin as the language of public affairs. Valerius Maximus records that, in the second century, Roman magistrates made a point of answering Greeks only in Latin, though the rule was not always adhered to, and insisted that even in Asia and Greece itself, submissions made in Greek should be translated into Latin (Salmon, 1982, 121). The resistance to the hellenization of Rome abated in the late Republic, though the censors issued an edict expressing disapproval of Latin rhetoricians and their 'new kind of education' in 92 BC, and as late as the second century AD, Juvenal was complaining of Rome 'I cannot bear this city gone Greek'. As Latin literature and drama, albeit Greek influenced, came into its own and produced its own geniuses, and as monumental and indisputably *Roman* architecture rose to dominate the centre of Rome, so the threat posed by Hellenism to Roman values and the traditional Roman way of life may seem to have receded.

In fact, some of the most fundamental and far-reaching effects of the hellenization of Rome, for both good and ill, were only just beginning to make their real impact. Cato and the younger Scipio had been alarmed by the increasing greed, scepticism, and moral laxity of Rome's ruling classes. There is no reason to think that the erosion of traditional values was halted in the earlier first century BC, rather the opposite. Polybius had already noted the decline in the morality of the governing class, and the use of wealth to buy success in urban elections was a disturbing development, which in time would lead naturally enough to the purchase of the army's loyalty and to providing the populace of Rome with extravagant spectacles. It was the followers of Stoicism and most notably Cicero, whose eclectic views embraced Stoicism, who led the struggle in the first century BC to preserve both political virtue and the Republic. In this sense Stoicism became a political philosophy, in contrast to Epicureanism which, as

Scullard has observed (1959, 211) had a negative influence on public life 'in that it withdrew men from politics'. After the establishment of the Principate it was again the Stoics – L. Cornutus, Musonius Rufus, Seneca and A. Percius Flaccus – who spoke, or wrote, against the extravagancies, vices and corruption of Rome in general and the principate in particular. Stoicism became involved in the dangerous day-to-day politics of imperial Rome; it 'was the creed of many of the men who joined Piso in his attempt to kill Nero' (Scullard, 1959, 371). But by this time the tide of events had of course become far too strong to be resisted by the force of philosophy alone.

The emergence of the Principate was a lengthy and complex process, but some of its roots can be plausibly traced to Hellenistic influences in Republican Rome. Barrow, for example, was convinced that it was Latin translations of the Iliad and Odyssey, and performances of Greek drama, which brought home to ambitious Romans the opportunities which existed for men of flair, imagination, character, and perhaps daring, to mould the affairs of state (Barrow, 1949, 62); this seems unlikely. A far more potent factor was that as Rome became more directly involved in Greece and the Hellenistic east, so Romans found themselves holding office in provinces where the luxuries and adulation previously lavished on Hellenistic monarchs were theirs for the taking. The opportunities to exploit the rich resources of these provinces for their own political and personal ends were often too great to resist and were instead shamelessly embraced. Here, too, they came into closer contact with the legendary figure of Alexander, a man who by personal charisma and command of an army, had replaced democracies and oligarchies alike with a single authoritarian regime. It was Alexander too who had created, for the first time, a European empire which dominated much of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. As the wealth of the Hellenistic provinces came within reach of the Roman state in the later second and early first centuries BC, so the Roman attitude to the provinces became increasingly avaricious. It would be too much to claim that the idea of empire, and beyond that of an emperor, were simply borrowed directly from the Hellenistic world, but Rome's dealings with that world increasingly led her in that direction. They also helped to provide her with some of the means by which to build and hold an empire. The earliest such acquisition, but one of the most fundamental to the success of building an empire in the Mediterranean, was a fleet, and of course the skills with which to use it. From the time of the first Punic War, Roman naval techniques had relied heavily on Greek practices. In the second century Rome depended increasingly on her Greek allies, and later her Greek

subjects, for both ships and sailors. As these ships and men were gradually absorbed into the Roman fleets, so their Greek methods grew more influential than ever in the development of Roman naval warfare (Starr, 1960). Hellenistic influence on the growth of the Roman army was less wide-ranging and fundamental, but it was significant in one important area, that of siege warfare and war machines. It was the Hellenistic Greeks who developed the various forms of catapult which the Romans adopted and used with great effect from one end of their expanding empire to the other. It was they, too, who taught the Romans the principal methods and techniques of siege warfare, in which the war machines played a vital role.

But winning and holding an empire was not achieved solely by developing highly trained and well-equipped forces. Greek history, with which the Romans were well acquainted, and their own involvement with the Greeks of both southern Italy and Greece, taught the Romans the invaluable lesson of divide and conquer. Rome rejected loose alliances, associations of equals, and federal solutions to political problems; after an initial reluctance to annexe new territory she imposed her rule directly over an evergrowing area, and she often did so by encouraging dissension amongst her opponents. From the later second century BC onwards, having seized new territories, Rome followed Alexander's example by planting new cities, usually as military colonies, in the conquered area. Cities were as central to Rome's plans to Romanize their empire, as they were to Hellenize Alexander's. The success of urbanization in turn depended on the successful development of commerce and markets. Greek traders and Greek shipping played a vital role in that development, and even more fundamental to its success was the Roman adoption of silver coinage based on the Greek. Such coinage enabled conquered peoples, and especially their craftsmen and traders, to be rapidly absorbed into the Roman economic system. This was to be of particular importance in the stimulation and intensification of economic activity in Rome's northern and western provinces in the later first century BC and the first century AD.

The development of overseas commerce in which foreigners played an important part in turn led the Romans to modify their civil law. To the Romans, Hellenistic commercial law was unacceptably flexible and pragmatic, but they recognized the necessity to afford legal protection to foreign traders. Thus they appointed a 'foreign praetor' to look after their interests, and developed the concept of *ius gentium* (very broadly, international law). Many scholars would argue that there were few other significant Hellenistic influences on Roman law, and, given the Roman distaste for the abstract and theoretical thinking which characterized much

Greek legal practice, that would seem likely (Wilkinson, 1975, 69). But Kunkel has forcefully rejected such a view (1966, 94):

The inner structure [of Roman law], the methods and forms of juristic activity, underwent a thorough-going transformation in the last century of the Republic. The impulse was provided by contact with Greek learning, above all with the disciplines of rhetoric and philosophy.

He points to the Greek influences on the great Republican jurists, Q. Mucius Scaevola and Servius Sulpicius Rufus; the work of both men continued to be influential into the imperial age. Their contemporary, Cicero, in whom rhetoric and Stoicism was most effectively combined, also exercised a profound influence on the practical application of Roman law. In time, the *iurisprudentes*, most of whom were heavily influenced by Stoicism, became a recognized and influential body of opinion, the views of which were carefully studied by Roman magistrates. Through their writings and their pronouncements they contributed to the formulation of Roman law for more than two centuries. Yet it remains true that in the main Greek influence on Roman law was exercised not so much on the content of that law, but rather on its practical implementation and interpretation. Kunkel has rightly claimed that in the final analysis it was the alliance of Roman tradition and sobriety with Greek logic and clarity, which improved both the methods and form of Roman law (1966, 94).

It is indeed difficult to deny that, in general, the Greek influence on Rome and Roman culture as a whole was beneficial. Even those Romans who sought to minimize the impact of Hellenism on Rome were unable completely to ignore or resist the influence of Greek culture. Cato, after all, spoke Greek, was well-acquainted with Greek literature, and betrayed considerable Greek influence in both his *Origins* and his *On Agriculture*. He had a Greek tutor for his children and it was he who erected the first Greek-style basilica (the Basilica Porcia) in Rome. But it was not *Greek* language, literature, or education that Cato resisted so vehemently, but rather *Hellenistic* culture. Most Romans professed to scorn the Hellenistic Greeks and admire the Greeks of the classical age. There is some truth in Barrow's assertion that Hellenistic culture 'lacked spontaneity and vigour, it was sophisticated and self-conscious, apathetic and disillusioned' (1949, 37). Yet, paradoxically, it was the culture of Hellenistic Greece which, in practice, the Romans so enthusiastically embraced; their acquaintance with classical culture was largely second-hand and at a distance, apart from the original vases and sculptures they managed to acquire. It was the teachings

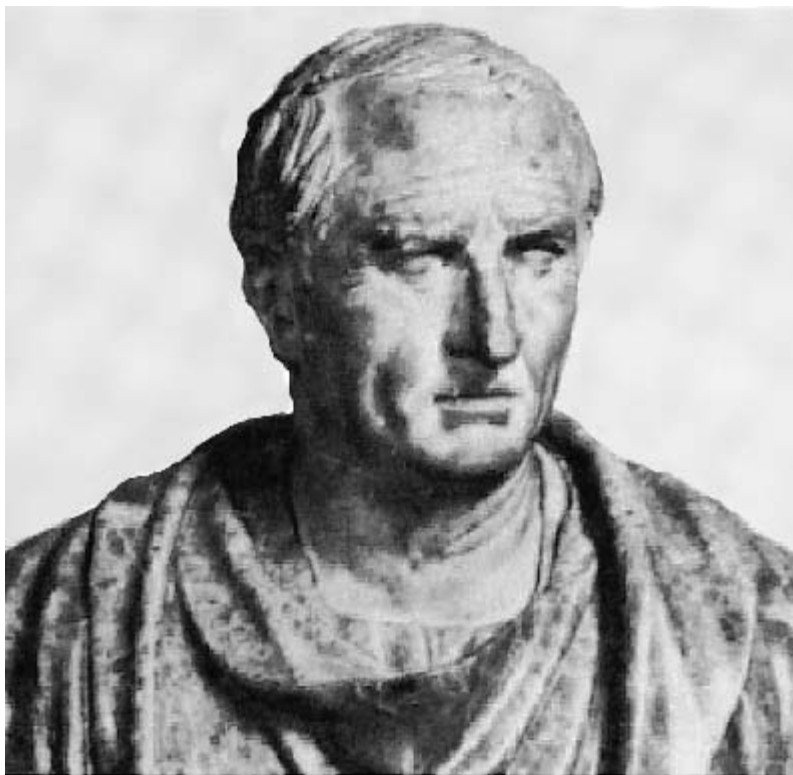
of the Hellenistic philosophers (Zeno and Epicurus) which were most widely adopted and which had the most significant effects on Roman law, poetry and politics. It was the stimulus of Hellenistic sculptors, not least those of the Pergamene school, which contributed most to the development of Roman sculpture, whether portrait, relief, or 'continuous style'. Again, it was the Hellenistic navies and military engineers who taught Rome most about warfare, and the founder of the Hellenistic world, Alexander, who gave Rome the model of empire. On balance these Hellenistic contributions far outweighed the detrimental influences exerted by the huge influx of Hellenistic wealth in the second century BC, by the moral laxity of some Hellenistic cults, and by the potential dangers inherent in the Roman passion for Greek rhetoric. In the long term 'it was primarily her willingness to respond to Hellenism that made Rome normative, largely for good, in Western civilisation' (Wilkinson, 1975, 75).



3.1 Sculptured Etruscan sarcophagus



3.2 The Francois Vase, Florence Museum



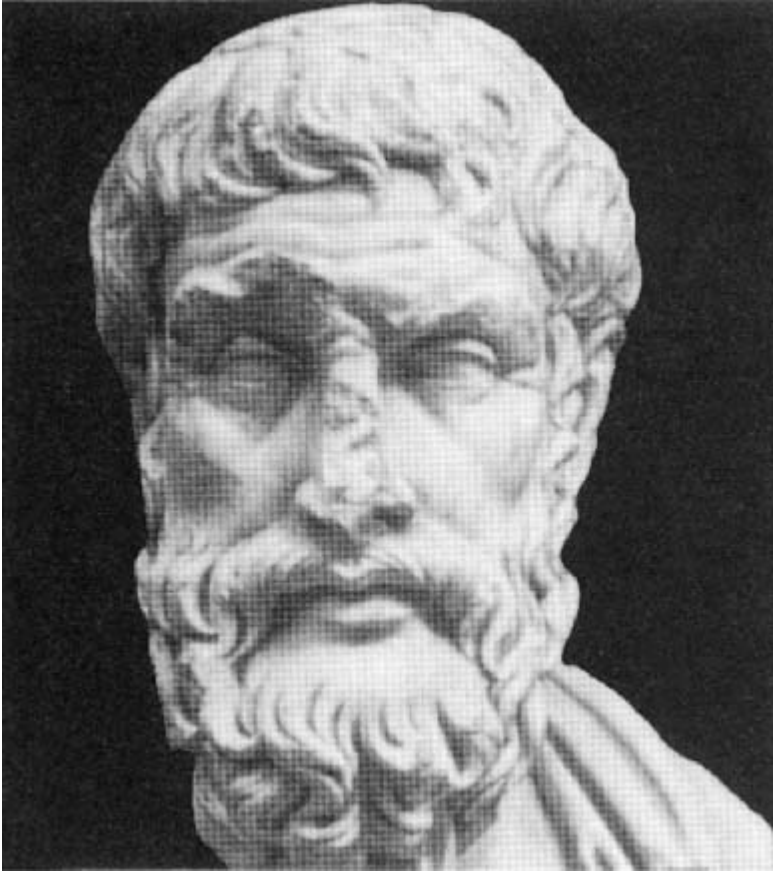
3.3 Bust of Cicero



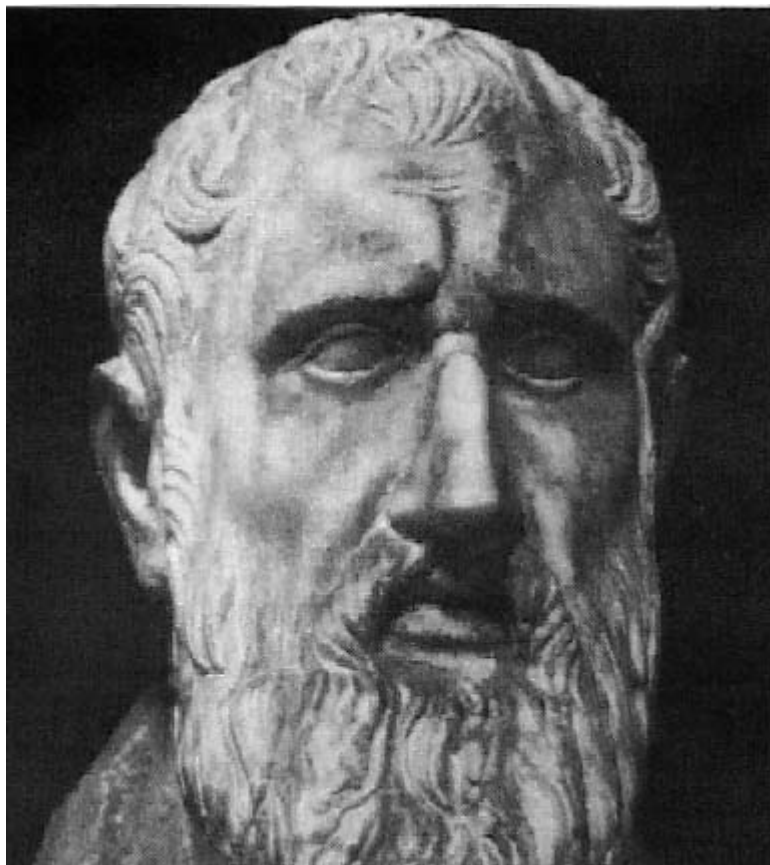
3.4 The 'Boxer' of Apollonios



3.5 Greek comedy illustrated on a relief from Pompeii



3.6 Bust of Epicurus



3.7 Bust of Zeno



3.8 Statue of Cato

• THE • LEGACY • OF • THE • • REPUBLIC •

David C. Braund

The Roman Republic is traditionally conceived as the long period beginning with the expulsion of the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus, in 509 BC and ending with the advent of the first emperor, Augustus, victor at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. With Augustus came the Principate. The history of the Roman Republic, over this period of almost half a millennium, is the history of the growth of a small and rather insignificant city-state into an imperial power which ruled the whole Mediterranean basin and stretched beyond. It is the history of the social, political and economic pressures and tensions entailed in this expansion. The aim of this essay is to explore the pressures and tensions of the Republic so as better to understand the Principate. Selectivity of the highest order is demanded by limitations of space: matters covered in depth elsewhere in this collection, e.g. provincial government ([Part 6, Chapter 15](#)), will be deliberately neglected here. Change dominates history – creates it, ultimately – but there is also continuity. Continuity was far more important in Roman ideology. Roman society was little concerned with progress and the future: tradition (*mos maiorum*) and the past were all-powerful and all pervasive. Change for the good was essentially the restoration of tradition and the past. Innovation was dangerous: it threatened decline. Of course there was change but that change was structured, conceived and justified in terms of the restoration of the past (see North, 1976, on conservatism and change in Roman religion).

The overwhelming importance of tradition in Roman society is a

warning for the historian tempted to consider Roman history in terms of turning points and separate periods. Persistent obsession with tradition fosters continuity even within a broad framework of change. In other words, while the terms 'Republic' and 'Principate' suggest separation and change, we should expect continuity, mitigating and to an extent denying this change. It is not only that the Republic conditioned the Principate: it also continued into the Principate.

The early history of the Republic and of the Regal Period which preceded it is largely a matter of myth and legend. These legends were constructed in part by learned Greeks concerned to trace and explain the genesis of this great non-Greek power in terms of Greek mythology; also by Romans concerned to establish their genealogy and, thus, their nobility and identity. The result was a confused and inconsistent history of early Rome: we know of some thirty significantly different accounts of the foundation of Rome (Cornell, 1975; cf. Wiseman, 1979).

The aftermath of the monarchy was a period of turmoil for some 150 years as the social and political structure of the Republic evolved. Society remained divided between the polarities of rich landowners and landless poor. Political power was in the hands of the rich. The Senate was the administrative centre of the political structure; its members were drawn from the elite and its members were those who held high political office. The highest political office, the consulship, was dominated by a small circle within that landowning aristocracy. Lower magistrates, praetors, aediles and quaestors, were drawn from a small circle which was hardly less exclusive. Of course, there were elections, held in Assemblies of the people, but these too were dominated by the élite which used its wealth and patronage, and the advantages which it enjoyed as a result of a voting system unbalanced in favour of the propertied (Staveley, 1972, [Part 2](#)). Religion further reinforced the dominance of the élite which also provided the priests. Law was constructed by the élite for the élite. Justice was conceived in proportion to status: natural justice was conceived as the dominance of the élite – the dominance which Roman law reinforced both *de iure* and *de facto* (Finley, 1983, 7). The Roman economy remained fundamentally and overwhelmingly agrarian. Possession of land was therefore possession of the means of production as well as a source of prestige and a particularly safe investment (Finley, 1973).

But the élite was not a monolith. For all its common interests the élite was fragmented into groupings of families and individuals. Within the peer group constituted by the élite, there was an ever-present struggle for elevation and, ultimately, supremacy. Of course, there was no resemblance

to political parties. Alliances were readily formed on a temporary, *ad hoc* basis and readily dissolved again: the historian has to search hard for anything resembling the political programmes and policies of the modern world. But struggles might be fierce; they were the embryonic forms of the civil wars which produced the Principate. Family connections, extended and confirmed by marriages, and patronage, variously expressed in terms of clientage (*clientela*) and friendship (*amicitia*), founded upon the exchange of goods and services, were the most important cohesive forces within these groupings; patronage bound members of the élite to each other – conventionally as friends – and bound poorer dependants – conventionally known as clients – to the more wealthy and powerful (Saller, 1982, is more subtle, rightly).

Peer group in-fighting accelerated most sharply towards outright civil warfare in the course of the second century BC. Then Rome was engaged in almost permanent foreign wars as she expanded within the Mediterranean world; there were major wars in Spain, Gaul, North Africa, Greece and Asia Minor, sometimes fought simultaneously in different theatres. To the wealthy who commanded Rome's armies imperialism provided the military glory (*gloria*) so prized by the élite and so central to its militaristic ideology (Harris, 1979, [Chapter 1](#)). It also provided vast amounts of booty. The élite used this booty as it had always used its wealth: principally, to buy property, especially land. Land brought with it social status and was considered appropriate to that status. At the same time, land was a secure investment which involved minimal risk for the investor and brought him a reasonable return. In this way, imperialism increased pressure on land as the élite sought to invest its windfalls of wealth in the traditional manner.

The lower ranks of the legions were drawn in the second century from the smallholders, men with land, but not much. They were conscripts who were required to serve for the duration of a campaign, often several years spent far from their homesteads. While they were absent on campaign, their families were deprived of their labour. Some families might cope but others would not. Imperialism therefore made smallholdings more vulnerable to the rich who, also as a result of imperialism, had increased sums to invest in land. In this way imperialism encouraged the élite to become owners of vast acreages of land, though often fragmented into geographically distinct units. On these estates, usually described as *latifundia*, slaves were used more extensively than on the smallholdings. Imperialism made slave-owning on a large scale more attractive and more possible: vast numbers of Rome's defeated enemies were enslaved and the price of slaves was

reduced accordingly. Moreover, slaves, unlike peasants, could not be taken off the land by recruitment into the army. The labour of the peasantry was in part replaced by the labour of slaves, though free casual labour was still important even on large estates, particularly at harvest time when a temporarily large labour force was required to cope with the extra work involved on a short-term basis. Moreover, many peasant smallholders survived. The degree to which slaves replaced peasants in the second century BC has often been exaggerated (Rich, 1983, 296). Precise measurement is impossible.

The Hannibalic war which dominated the last two decades of the third century BC had made its own particular contribution to the development of *latifundia*; war had raged up and down Italy creating disorder. After the war, wealthy men who had made loans to the state to finance the war were repaid with lands leased to them by the state at peppercorn rents (Brunt, 1971, 269–77 and 358–60; Hopkins, 1978, [Chapters 1–2](#)).

But the Roman army depended upon the peasant smallholders who filled its ranks. How could recruitment be maintained at a time when the number of peasant smallholders was in decline as a result of the very imperialism which made recruitment necessary? A possible solution was legislation on landholding designed to make the required land available to the peasantry. But that would be to take land from the élite which would be revolution. When in 133 BC Tiberius Gracchus introduced modest measures to make some public land, occupied by the wealthy, available to the poor, he was first opposed by ‘legal’ means and then clubbed to death by a mob of senators and their retainers; Gracchus’ measures seem to have achieved a little, but not much. Subsequent attempts at land reform in the late Republic were similarly greeted (Badian, 1972b).

Another solution was to put to one side the problems of the peasantry and to recruit into the army those who had no property. In 107 BC Marius did just this: under pressure to recruit soldiers to fight in North Africa, he by-passed the traditional system of conscription of the propertied and enrolled volunteers, with no property qualification. But Marius’ army reform, as it is called, was by no means revolutionary. The minimum property qualification is thought to have been reduced progressively from the Hannibalic War onwards in order to meet the needs of recruitment. If the figures are correct, the minimum property qualification could hardly be reduced further with any impact. Abolition was the next step, no longer very great and not without particular precedents: Marius took that step (Gabba, 1976, [Chapters 1–2](#)). Conscription, however, remained important (Brunt, 1971, 10). Indeed, scholars are now undertaking a thorough

reassessment of the place of Marius' action in the history of the later Republic. Rich, in particular, has successfully raised important doubts about the reliability of the standard interpretation of the second century set out above: he argues with much justice that there may *not* have been a serious shortage of propertied recruits in that century after all (Rich, 1983). The fragility of any interpretation of the second century is becoming ever more apparent, born as it is of the paucity and poor quality of our sources for the latter half of that century in particular.

Yet the effects of this change were far-reaching, even if its impact was not immediate (Rich, 1983, 323–30). The army was not only under the command of its general; it was also dependent upon his patronage, which permeated Roman society. Its role in politics has been observed; it had long had a military face, but now the landless soldier depended upon his general for provision on his discharge. The provision of land for veterans immediately became, and remained, a focus of political in-fighting in the late Republic. The crucial point is that the general now commanded an army which was not only a Roman army but also, and ever more importantly, his own army. The political battles of the past, already prone to violence as in the case of the Gracchi (Lintott, 1968), were now poised to become civil wars. In 88 BC a Roman general, Sulla, marched on Rome for the first time. Roman expansion had therefore generated problems which in turn generated the civil wars that brought about the Principate.

War in Italy had only just subsided: from 91 to 89 BC Rome's Italian allies were in revolt, the so-called Social War. Their aims are unclear; Roman citizenship was a primary aim, but there was also talk of Italian independence (Brunt, 1965; Gabba, 1976, [Chapter 3](#)). Again, Roman expansion seems to have precipitated this conflict. Roman recruiting problems had led to an increased use of Italian troops, a situation which persisted even after 107 (Brunt, 1971, 677–86). Italian aspirations seem to have increased proportionately. It is worth remembering that Rome's dominance in Italy was ultimately founded upon her military superiority over the Italians, who might indeed seek an improved position as their military importance grew *vis-à-vis* that of Rome. But, again, the weakness of the evidence must be acknowledged (Rich, 1983, 323).

The Italians lost the war but won the citizenship. The granting of Roman citizenship to individuals and communities continued until Caracalla's grant of citizenship to all the free of the empire in AD 212 (Sherwin-White, 1973, 380ff.). The Italian families who received the citizenship as a result of the Social War were to provide some of the leading figures of the Augustan regime (Wiseman, 1971, 10). Provincials were soon to follow

them into the Senate (Braund, 1984, 173). Of course, these men were members of the Italian and provincial elites (cf. Wilson, 1966), and they were easily absorbed into the Senate, despite the sneers of some of the established senatorial aristocracy; their concern and attitudes were essentially the same.

Sulla's march on Rome created a civil war which he finally won after a second march on the capital in 83 BC. Many died, not only in actual fighting but also in the proscriptions instituted both by Sulla and by his leading opponents, Marius, Cinna and Carbo. Sulla became dictator in 82. Technically, he was awarded the office quite properly under a *lex Valeria*; he showed a marked concern to act within elite traditions (today often glorified as 'the constitution') as far as possible in the circumstances.

Sulla put through a programme of legislation designed to restore the old dominance of the Senate – in other words of the ruling, élite peer-group, now somewhat widened – which had been undermined by pressure for agrarian reform and by the internal pressures which had generated Sulla's dictatorship. To that end, the Senate was approximately doubled in size; the new senators seem to have included Italians who had remained loyal in the Social War. Henceforth, twenty men gained the office of quaestor each year and with it entry into the Senate. But that in itself was to create a problem for the future: each year twenty quaestors climbed on to the bottom rung of the political ladder, but only two reached the top of that ladder: the consulship. Therefore, in very simple terms, every year, the eighteen men who failed to achieve the consulship were political casualties (Badian, 1970). These failures might very well have been plunged deep into debt as a result of electoral expenses which they had hoped to recoup through provincial office in the event of success. The savagery of Roman law on debt exacerbated their plight (Frederiksen, 1966). These were the pressures which drove Catiline to revolution in 63 BC.

Sulla tinkered with the 'constitution' but had not dealt with the source of the problems he perceived. If it is accepted that the source was the structure and ideology of Roman society itself, together with the imperialism that had sprung from that very source, it may seem that Sulla could only have succeeded with a radical alternative. The most obvious one for him was doubtless the retention of his dominance, but he preferred the less radical course of retirement.

When Sulla retired in 79 BC, the inadequacy of his arrangements became immediately apparent, for one of the consuls of 78, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, soon sought to emulate him. Lepidus was swiftly dealt with, but at a price. Pompey, a lieutenant of Sulla, was given an

extraordinary command for the purpose. His rise to power through such commands (after Lepidus, against Marian remnants in Spain under Sertorius and against the pirates who infested the Mediterranean) culminated in his conquest of the East and triumphant return to Rome in 62 BC (Seager, 1979). Pompey was preeminent, but he needed political friends in order to achieve his ends against strong opposition from within the senatorial oligarchy. He therefore joined in an informal alliance with the senior Crassus and Julius Caesar, a rising star in 60 BC; both had their own short-term reasons for joining Pompey in this informal alliance, conventionally and misleadingly known as the First Triumvirate. Caesar gained the consulship of 59 BC and passed legislation so that Crassus obtained the revision of the Asian tax contracts (Badian, 1972a, 100ff.) while Pompey received land for his veterans and the confirmation of his acts in the east. The three dominated politics at Rome, though still against opposition from an entrenched oligarchy in the Senate. By now the letter of Sulla's legislation had to a large extent been rescinded while its spirit had been totally subverted.

After his consulship Caesar left for the north and Gaul where he campaigned till 49 BC. Pompey stayed at Rome, where he was drawn gradually closer to the senatorial oligarchy and away from Caesar. Crassus died in the east fighting the Parthians in 53 BC and in 49 BC Caesar crossed the Rubicon and started the civil war against Pompey, and those who placed themselves behind him. It was not totally extinguished, despite Pompey's death in 48 BC, before Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, though the last serious fighting took place at Munda in Spain in spring 45 BC.

The background to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon is complex, but his main stimulus is clear enough. The entrenched oligarchy in the Senate was bent on removing Caesar from his Gallic command and from all political office. Caesar could not allow this, for, once out of office, he would be vulnerable to political, judicial and quite probably physical attack. Caesar had little choice but to fight.

Victory presented Caesar with problems. Quite apart from the damage caused by the war itself, Caesar had to find a position for himself within the state. An obvious model was Sulla, who had held the dictatorship for a short period. Caesar was first made dictator, and ultimately dictator for life, early in 44 BC. Caesar's watchword was clemency; he pardoned even his greatest enemies. Clemency was particularly desirable for him, as he might otherwise have been compared with the bloody Marius and Sulla; the former through their personal connection, notably the fact that Marius' wife Julia was also Caesar's aunt, and the latter if only because Sulla had been

the last Roman dictator.

But traditionally the dictatorship was an essentially temporary office: perpetual dictatorship was quite contrary to Roman tradition. There were rumours that Caesar intended to become king, even a god. Both were totally unacceptable to this tradition. Provincials had paid divine honours to Romans abroad since the third century BC at least, but worship by Romans in Rome was quite another matter, despite the headway that Hellenistic culture had made at Rome over previous centuries (Taylor, 1931). The more plausible charge that Caesar was aiming at kingship was hardly less serious. The Roman attitude to kings was somewhat ambivalent; although they were regarded as exotic, even charismatic, creatures, they were also dangerous, untrustworthy, capricious and usually tyrannical. The legendary history of early Rome reinforced this attitude, which may well have created that history; Roman kings had included relatively admirable kings like Numa but ultimately a tyrant in Tarquinius Superbus.

Historians, plagued by the particular inadequacy of the sources on these accusations, still debate their validity (Weinstock, 1971 with North, 1975 and Rawson, 1975). But whether Caesar had aimed at becoming king or not, there was little practical difference between a perpetual dictator and a king. Both were quite contrary to the traditions of the Republic. Caesar had not fashioned for himself a viable position within the state. Neither had he evolved a satisfactory relationship with those he had defeated; he proffered clemency but he left the élite to fear the loss of its traditional authority and prestige. Paradoxically the very fact that Caesar had the power to act with clemency made its own contribution to this fear.

Caesar's legislation is often admired today because it addressed some fundamental problems. But this very admiration should be a warning; restoration at Rome was more valued than reform. Reforms of the law on debt and the method of tax collection, in Asia at least, could only excite opposition from the elite which had not only a love of tradition but also its own vested interests (Frederiksen, 1966; Badian, 1972a with Braund, 1983). Even his reform of the calendar, for all its utility, was susceptible to a sinister interpretation, for the calendar was profoundly religious and had first been drawn up, it was believed, by a king, Numa. Who was Caesar to tamper with it? What did he mean by it? And what of his appointment of Caninius Rebilus as consul for less than a day? Was this not an insult to senatorial tradition and a symptom of Caesar's broader unconcern for the outraged sensibilities of the elite? (Gelzer, 1968, [Chapter 6](#).)

The motives of the conspirators who murdered Caesar in 44 are impenetrable in detail, but the removal of the quasi-monarchical

domination of Caesar and the restoration of the Republic seems to have been their principal aim; it was certainly their claim. These champions of 'liberty' (*libertas*) had nothing to offer but the removal of Caesar. The dynamic that had given rise to Caesar remained unchanged. As Caesar had followed Sulla so someone would follow Caesar. Sulla had set the example and Caesar had confirmed it.

The principal conflict for power soon came to lie between Antony, Caesar's lieutenant, and Octavian, Caesar's nephew by birth, but adopted as Caesar's son in his will. In 43 BC Antony and Octavian formed the so-called Second Triumvirate together with the noble Lepidus who never became a serious contender for sole power in his own right. This triumvirate, unlike its predecessor, was formal and official; its brief was to 'constitute the state'. Proscriptions followed; Cicero was one of their many victims. At Philippi in 42 BC the cause of the conspirators was finally finished with the defeat of Brutus and Cassius by the triumvirs.

In 31 BC Octavian defeated Antony at the battle of Actium; the next year Antony died in Alexandria where Octavian had pursued him. The previous decade or so had been a period of uneasy peace between the two principal contenders punctuated by fraught negotiations and finally erupting into the war that had long threatened. In the meantime, lesser men had suffered.

After Philippi, the triumvirs had allotted the west to Octavian, the east to Antony and Africa to Lepidus. At the same time, they disbanded most of their legions; Octavian was left with the problem of settling some 100,000 veterans. His solution was simple; the expropriation of many of those who had land and the installation of veterans in their place. Actual fighting followed as relatives of Antony in Italy moved against Octavian, but without success; the sufferings of the masses were doubtless only increased.

There was also Sextus Pompey, the surviving son of Caesar's enemy. Exploiting his father's name and the discontent and disruption caused principally by the proscriptions and expropriations, he was temporarily successful (Hadas, 1930). His was a war of attrition. Based on Sicily and Sardinia, his ships won him a place at the conference table by obstructing the sea-borne imports of grain upon which Rome depended. But in 36 Octavian and Lepidus finally succeeded in smashing Sextus on Sicily; having fled to the east he was killed by Antony's men. Meanwhile, on Sicily, Lepidus had claimed the island for himself but had been deserted by his troops. Octavian gave Lepidus his life and allowed him to remain *pontifex maximus*, but deprived him of his position as triumvir.

The positive and negative propaganda produced on all sides in the period

from 44 BC down to Actium and beyond dominates the history of these years. Each contender for power sought to represent himself as the champion of everything Roman, of Roman traditional values, of the Roman *res publica*. The figure of Cleopatra stands out in this propaganda; Octavian's supporters before and after his victory painted her as a 'deadly monster' in Horace's words. As a queen she was fundamentally suspect. We have observed Roman hostility towards kings; a queen, a monarch and a woman, was even more dangerous than a king to the Roman mind, to which women in official positions of power were at best an anomaly and usually an anathema. She could also be viewed as a despised Egyptian, though she was in fact of Macedonian descent and may even have been granted Roman citizenship by Caesar or Antony (Braund, 1984, 179).

Octavian's propaganda stressed Antony's relationship with the strange, foreign queen; it claimed that she had infatuated and corrupted a noble Roman and that through him she constituted a terrible threat to the Roman state and its traditions. Octavian was thus presented, not as the leader of a faction in civil war bent on establishing himself in power, but as the champion of the *res public*, against a fearful foreign foe. Dionysiac ritual at the Ptolemaic court, as elsewhere in the east, lent substance to Octavian's allegations of 'foreign ways' (see Griffin, 1977).

Antony hit back, for example, with the claim that Octavian was planning to marry a Thracian princess and to marry off his own daughter to her royal Thracian father. Had Antony won at Actium this Thracian princess might possibly have become known as a more famous temptress even than Cleopatra. But it was Octavian who won and thus his perspective; we do not even know the name of that princess. Antony escaped relatively lightly; Sextus Pompey was branded a pirate and a slur on the name of his father, who had done so much to rid the Mediterranean of that breed.

Upon his victory Octavian was faced with problems markedly similar to those that had faced Julius Caesar; on the one hand, the aftermath of a civil war that had involved all the Mediterranean world and damaged much of it, and, on the other, the need to find himself a place within the traditions which we misleadingly describe as 'the constitution', the *mos maiorum*.

Conspiracy was an ever-present threat for Octavian and for the emperors who followed him. Potential opponents could be killed; Octavian killed Antony's eldest son by Fulvia, and Ptolemy Caesar, more familiar under his nickname Caesarion, whom Antony and Cleopatra declared to be Cleopatra's son by Caesar; Caesar's heir could not risk such rivals. But widespread killing created at least as many enemies as it removed, for in such circumstances all feared for their lives and might be driven to

opposition by their fear as well as by motives of vengeance for the dead; killing was the mark of the tyrant-king. Octavian wisely avoided widespread killing and proclaimed his clemency, following the example of Julius Caesar.

Octavian returned to Rome in 29 BC after appointing men he thought reliable to key provincial governorships in the east, though the most important local kings of Antony's regime were retained (Bowersock, 1965). In Rome he celebrated three triumphs for his victories in the war in Illyricum, a war of conquest waged in the previous decade, the war of Actium and the war of Alexandria: of course all were projected as wars against foreign foes. These were followed by the triumphs of Octavian's most prominent supporters (Syme, 1939, 303). The triumph was the ultimate achievement of the Roman noble, but it was soon to become the sole prerogative of members of the imperial family (Versnel, 1970). Octavian and his successors were concerned to obtain and maintain superior military prestige. This dynamic was central to much of the military activity of the Principate: a conspicuous example is Claudius' invasion of Britain in AD 43 which had little point but to provide the emperor with military prestige (Millar, 1982).

But military glory alone was not enough: Caesar had had military glory in plenty but had soon been killed nevertheless. To avoid a similar fate, Octavian needed to come to an accommodation with the rest of the 'elite'. By 23 BC his constitutional position had largely been evolved, built around tribunician power; other options had been mooted and continued to be advanced even after 23 BC (Brunt and Moore, 1967, 8–16). The emperor thus received legal powers defined and structured in terms of the Republican magistracies. Fundamentally, the Roman emperor was a magistrate and a senator: his occasional holding of the consulship and his regular presence at and involvement in senatorial debates reinforced the fact (Millar, 1977, 216). Like a Republican magistrate he also held religious office. After the death of the incumbent, the ex-triumvir Lepidus, in 12 BC, the emperor became, in addition to his other religious offices, *pontifex maximus*, chief priest of the Roman state under the Republic. Henceforth, the *pontifex maximus* was always the emperor.

The emperor was also Augustus. Octavian, who was usually called Caesar, had been awarded the name in 27 BC, and he was thus transformed into Augustus. This name evoked the religious charisma and authority which was expressed in more direct and extreme form in the provinces despite the attempts of some emperors to curb such expressions (Brunt and Moore, 1967, 77–8; Taylor, 1931 with Price, 1980). It was also compared

to the *cognomina* boasted by the old nobility, names like Africanus and Numantinus; though similar, the religious associations of the name Augustus made it superior. At the same time his use of the title *imperator* ('general') as a forename declared to all his military prowess and achievements (on Augustus' nomenclature, Syme, 1939, 361–77).

The 'virtues' of Augustus, his courage, clemency, justice and piety, were affirmed by an inscription on a gold shield placed in the Senate House (Wallace-Hadrill, 1981). The door posts of his own house were clothed in laurel in celebration of his victory. Above the door was placed a civic crown of oak leaves, the award traditionally made to a soldier for valour in saving the life of a fellow citizen. Augustus had saved citizens by defeating the 'foreign foe' and by exercising clemency thereafter; the civic crown was to become the particular symbol of imperial clemency (Griffin, 1976, 146). Clemency was itself to be associated with the role of the emperor as 'Father of his Country' (*pater patriae*); Augustus was awarded the title in 2 BC. There was some Republican precedent (Brunt and Moore, 1967, 80, also indicating the connection between this and the cult of the Genius Augusti, itself rooted in Republican tradition: cf. Liebeschuetz, 1979). After Augustus, the title *pater patriae* also became a regular feature of the emperor's nomenclature, though not a matter of course. It expressed the paternalism exercised by the emperor which was itself part of his broader patronage.

We have observed the importance of patronage in Roman society. With the Principate was created one supreme patron in the person of the emperor. Of course, he was by no means the only patron: patronage still pervaded Roman society in every sphere and at every level (Saller, 1982). But no patron could match the emperor. In his own account of his achievements, the *Res Gestae*, Augustus sets out in detail the sums spent on the plebs and on the soldiers, particularly in their settlement, for which he bought the land required (*Res Gestae* 15–16: the confiscations of Octavian seem to be omitted deliberately; cf. *Res Gestae* 3.3). All this was in addition to sums spent on public spectacles, reminiscent of the expenditures of Republican magistrates (Millar, 1977, 135–9). There was also his strenuous and expensive building activity, again reminiscent of the building activity of the Republican elite, but on a far greater scale. It enhanced his prestige together with that of Rome (the association should be noted) and at the same time provided work for the plebs (Brunt, 1980).

But the emperor also exercised his patronage over the elite. Increasingly, from Augustus on, the ambitious depended on the patronage of the emperor for social and political advancement (Millar, 1977, 278; Syme, 1979, 209).

The emperor regularly financed some senators to allow them to retain their positions (Millar, 1977, 297–9). He could only do so because of the massive wealth he had accumulated and continued to accumulate from booty, inheritances and other income, which was so great that the emperor soon subsidized the state treasury. It becomes very difficult from now on to draw distinctions between imperial wealth and state wealth, though some were drawn in antiquity (Millar, 1977, 133–201, esp. 189–201).

Augustus' position was further reinforced by his concern to establish and exhibit his respect for tradition. Nothing displays this concern more clearly than the *Res Gestae* wherein Augustus repeatedly insists upon his concern to champion tradition. Socially, he set about the restoration of ancient, therefore better, *mores*, most strikingly in his legislation on the family and on the manumission of slaves (Jones, 1970, 131–43). There was also religion; some saw the civil wars as the result of the neglect of the gods (Syme, 1939, 215). Augustus, with all his own charisma, restored lapsed priesthoods and ceremonies, restored old temples and built new ones. In particular he celebrated in grand style the beginning of a new *saeculum*, a golden age that was to be characterized by prosperity and the peace which Augustus had established within the state (of course foreign wars were quite acceptable). The descendant of Aeneas was an appropriate usher (Jones, 1970, 144–52).

Politically, Augustus expressed his concern for tradition by displaying a marked respect for 'the Senate and People of Rome' not least, once more, in his *Res Gestae*. In the Early Empire, in particular, the 'good' emperor was one who allowed the Senate as much of its traditional prestige as possible. To this end, the emperor, like Claudius, might actually need to demand that the Senate debate issues and reach its own decision (Momigliano, 1961, 39–40). *Libertas*, freedom, was this exercise of traditional functions, especially traditional senatorial functions, within the imperial framework; it was not republicanism (Wirszubski, 1950). The 'good' emperor was not an emperor at all. He was *princeps*, the leading man in the state, just as under the Republic there had been a number of *principes* in the senatorial elite. The *princeps* was a senator and a citizen, a *civis*, like any Roman; he was expected to behave as such (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982). The *princeps* relied upon his *auctoritas*, 'influence', much as Republican *principes* had done. Augustus himself makes the point in his *Res Gestae*: 'I excelled (sc. from 27 BC) all in influence (*auctoritas*), although I possessed no more official power (*potestas*) than others who were my colleagues in the several magistracies' (*Res Gestae* 34.1 and 34.3: translated Brunt and Moore).

The subtlety of the symbiosis of *princeps* and Senate has often been misunderstood. There was no dyarchy and no façade: the Principate was neither an equal partnership between emperor and Senate nor a massive confidence trick perpetrated by the emperor upon the Senate. Rather the *princeps'* dominance was quite apparent: it was significant that unlike Republican magistrates he did not need senatorial ratification of his actions and decisions. But for all that, he did not flaunt his dominance as Caesar had tended to do. He took great care to allow the Senate its old prestige, though, directly and indirectly, he controlled its composition and the careers of its members (Syme, 1939, 369ff.). The advantage for the *princeps* was clear. Allowed their traditional prestige senators had less stimulus to revolt against him; even erstwhile opponents would support his regime, as most senators did throughout the Principate. By behaving as *princeps* the emperor, as we call him, gained a great measure of security. Indeed, *the princeps*, steeped in traditional values, might actually conceive himself as the champion of senatorial traditions in particular and of Roman *mos maiorum* in general. How many tyrants conceive themselves as tyrants?

The *princeps* might even look back upon the Republic with nostalgia. Pompey was something of a hero under the Principate. So too was Cato, the best known figure in the entrenched senatorial oligarchy which had precipitated war in 49 BC, who had committed suicide after the Pompeian defeat at the battle of Thapsus in North Africa in 46 BC. Even Brutus and Cassius, Caesar's murderers, could be viewed with a degree of sympathy, even favour. That such stalwarts of Republican *libertas* also came to be associated with opposition to particular emperors does not change the fact (Syme, 1939, 213–16, cf. Wirszubski, 1950). By contrast, Caesar was something of an embarrassment. Augustus had derived prestige and charisma from being the son of the deified Caesar, *divi filius*. But Caesar was associated with kingship, domination and anti-republicanism (Syme, 1939, 317ff.). Though Caesar, after Sulla (and to an extent Pompey), had paved the way, it was Augustus who became the paradigm, the Republican *princeps*.

The strength of tradition had told against change; the political form had changed, but élite ideology, shared by the *princeps*, remained essentially the same. In other words, institutions had changed to a limited extent and were to change still further. But, on the whole, society and, in particular, the economy which supported these institutions, had been relatively little affected. The Principate was neither a new beginning for Rome nor a descent into the abyss; it was a political modification, which was to change

greatly after Augustus, as the, *princeps* evolved into an emperor proper.

Augustus had 'restored the Republic' (Millar, 1973, provides a useful perspective). But *res publica*, literally 'the public thing', did not mean 'Republic' in the modern sense: it meant something much nearer 'the state'. Augustus' 'restoration' of the *res publica*, the state, was not just political; it was also, and more fundamentally, social, moral, religious and, less directly, economic. The Roman state was to flourish in the peaceful conditions established by and dependent upon Augustus. Rome was born again, a literal renaissance celebrated in the Secular Games of 17 BC. This rebirth had been celebrated in poetry as early as the triumviral period when Vergil wrote his *Fourth Eclogue*. Contemporary concern with rebirth doubtless accounts for the proliferation of children in Augustan iconography, as in the reliefs on the Altar of Peace, completed in 9 BC (Walker and Burnett, 1980).

The advent of Augustus has been seen as an occasion of great innovation. To some extent it was. But the innovation, the change, was overwhelmed by the long-dominant Roman past and its traditions. The advent of Augustus was change within and through tradition, as he is at pains to point out in his *Res Gestae*. There, as elsewhere, he is presented as something new, remarkable and unusual and, to that extent, as an innovator and an innovation. But he is new by virtue of brilliant success and achievements which are of the traditional kind. He is an innovation by virtue of his greatness, applied to and achieved through his protection of the *res publica*, and tradition, not through their subversion. In the *Res Gestae* Augustus projects himself as a Republican noble writ large. That is, after all, precisely what he was.

From Augustus onwards, the changing relationship between the emperor (the noble writ large) and the rest of the elite in the Senate is central to the history of the Principate. Significantly, restoration of the Republic as we understand the term, by the removal of the emperor and a return to the dominance of the Senate, was seldom even mooted. The concern of the élite was principally to maintain its traditional prestige: this, not Republicanism, was *libertas*. Those emperors who threatened that prestige have come to be considered as 'bad' emperors, for so our sources portray them. For the emperor to threaten senatorial prestige, most directly by having senators executed and seizing their property, was to breed conspiracy. Usually, of course, a conspiracy to instal a new emperor, not to put an end to the Principate.

But the emperor was in a most delicate position, for his very existence tended to threaten senatorial prestige. Hence the wise emperor's concern to

play down his autocracy and to present himself not so much as emperor but as the most prominent senator, as a noble writ large. Succession was therefore a particular problem. While it might be agreed that the emperor was the most prominent senator, it need not follow, even in the context of an aristocratic ideology, that his son would be so in turn. Inheritance of the imperial position was therefore potentially inimical to the senatorial prestige upon which that position depended.

In the change from Republic to Principate continuity and tradition had exerted so strong an influence that the new emperor is, in important respects, hardly distinguishable from the most prominent figures of the Republic. Perhaps the experience of lengthy civil warfare had endowed tradition and the past with special attractions at this juncture. But no such particular explanation is necessary. The past had always dominated Rome, obstructing and conditioning change. It did so in the rise of Augustus and it continued to do so thereafter.

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PART 3

• THE • ARMY •

• THE • ARMY • OF • • THE • REPUBLIC •

G. R. Watson

The early period

The earliest Republican armies were naturally a continuation of the armies of the regal period, and, in particular, the army under the Etruscan kings, especially the two Tarquins, who may really have been one. The ‘Romulean’ army comprised traditionally 3,000 *pedites* and 300 *celeres*, provided by the three original Roman tribes, and presumably organized as a legion. It was most likely a purely patrician force. The influx of new settlers from the neighbouring hills and their organization into new tribes changed the army into a predominantly plebeian one, at the same time increasing its size. This reorganization was traditionally ascribed not to the Tarquins but to Servius Tullius, who was believed to have ruled between them. There are strong grounds, however, for ascribing ‘the Servian constitution’ not to the regal period, but to the middle of the fifth century BC (Dion. Hal. IV 16–21 and Livy I 42–8; Scullard, 1980, 74-).

This new arrangement, the *comitia centuriata*, was intended to preserve political and military power for the more prosperous sections of the Roman population. This was achieved by the division of the people into five classes, though those citizens above the highest class were mounted and composed the *equites*. The first class, with property rated at more than 100,000 *asses*, contained eighty centuries, the second, third and fourth, with proportionately smaller property, twenty centuries each, the fifth class, with about 11,000 *asses*, thirty centuries, although these figures have been disputed. In addition, at one extreme there were eighteen centuries of

wealthy men, the *equites*, and at the other five centuries of unarmed men, who had too little property, but served as armourers, smiths and trumpeters. This made a total of 193 centuries. The number of men in each century can hardly have been uniform, since the proletariat, who were *capite censi*, i.e. registered by heads, not by property, were the largest class, yet with only five centuries. This discrimination was intended: the *equites* and the first class, with a total of ninety-eight centuries and the privilege of voting first, had a built-in majority.

In each class half the centuries were made up of *seniors* (men aged 47 to 60), and half of *iuniores* (men aged 17 to 46). The junior centuries of the first three classes, sixty in all, probably formed the infantry when the army had only one legion. Sixty is the traditional number of centuries in a legion, and the Roman army was conservative to the core. Even in the developed legion of the imperial period with fifty-nine centuries, there were still sixty centuries; then the senior centurion, the *primuspilus iterumy* served not in the legion itself but at army headquarters.

In all classes, the seniors were intended for home guard service, the juniors for service in the field. The differences of wealth between the classes were reflected in their arms and equipment. The men of the first class were required to equip themselves with helmet, round shield, greaves, breastplate, sword and spear. In other words, they were hoplites. The second class had similar arms and armour, except that the long shield eliminated the need for round shield and breastplate. The third class was armed like the second, but with the omission of greaves. The fourth class had only spears and javelins, the fifth class only slings and stones. The remainder, those *capite censi* or *infra classem*, were exempt from service under arms, though they formed the bulk of the population. The advantage of the system from the military point of view was that the whole of the propertied citizenry was placed on a war footing, with the officers drawn from the wealthiest group, the *equites*. According to Livy the state helped the cavalry with their expenses:

For the purchase of horses they were allowed 10,000 *asses* each from the state treasury, and for the maintenance of these horses unmarried women were designated, who had to pay 2,000 *asses* each, every year.

These arrangements were, of course, practicable only when the campaigning season was limited to the summer, in the period between sowing and harvest. When campaigning became protracted, and lasted into the winter, or much longer, as in the siege of Veii (traditionally 406–396

BC) different arrangements had to be made. For the first time payment was made to the men. This was the first halting step towards the ultimate professionalization of the army. The amount of the pay at this date is not known. Presumably, however, as in the time of Polybius, it was based upon a daily rate.

This army of the early period was organized on the model of the Greek phalanx. The phalanx had, in the fourth century BC, proved almost invincible; long after its day had passed the Greek military writers continued to write as if the phalanx was the only conceivable method of military organization. Yet what Alexander found suited to the plains of Asia, or Pyrrhus to the plains of Southern Italy was not at all appropriate to the hill country of central Italy. The fullest description of the new organization is by Livy (VIII 8):

In the beginning the Romans used the small round shield (*clipeus*); later, after they began to receive pay for military service, the oblong shield (*scutum*) was adopted. The original phalanx formation, which was like the Macedonian one, became after-wards a line of battle formed by maniples, the rear being formed by a number of different troops. The front line was filled by the *hastate*, with fifteen maniples arranged at close intervals. Each maniple had twenty light-armed soldiers, with the remainder equipped with oblong shields: the light-armed had only a spear (*hasta*) and javelins. The front line consisted of the flower of the young men who were ripe for military service. Behind them were posted a like number of maniples of the *principes*, who were older men, who all carried oblong shields and had the better weapons. This body of thirty maniples in all were called the *antepilani* because behind the standards there were fifteen other battle-lines (*ordines*), each of which was divided into three parts, the first of each being called the *pilus* (a closed rank). Each of these lines consisted of three *vexilla*. A *vexillum* had sixty men, two centurions and one *vexillarius* (colour-sergeant). The line therefore numbered 186 men. The first *vexillum* had the *triarii*, experienced veterans; the second the *rorarii*, younger and less experienced men; the third the *accensi*, who were raw and therefore posted to the rear.

After the army had been drawn up in this fashion, the *hastati* were the first to engage the enemy. If the *hastati* were not successful in repulsing them, they would gradually withdraw through the intervals between the maniples of the *principes*, who were the next to take up the fight, with the *hastati* now in their rear. In the meantime the *triarii* had been kneeling beneath their standards with the left leg advanced, their shields

against their shoulders, and their spears fixed in the ground with their points obliquely forwards, as if the line of battle were protected by a bristling palisade. If the *principes* were equally without success, they gradually retired through the *triarii* (hence the proverbial expression for when people are in trouble ‘matters have now come down to the *triarii*’). After the *triarii* had let the *hastati* and *principes* through spaces between their *vexilla*, they stood up and closing their ranks at once, they blocked the routes, as it were, and in one dense mass they fell upon the enemy, for there were no reserves left behind them. The enemy, who as if they were victorious had been pursuing the others, saw to their consternation a new line suddenly spring up with even greater numbers. Generally, four legions were enrolled, each of 5,000 men, with 300 cavalry assigned to each legion.

Later the cavalry were generally supplied by the Roman allies, or *socii*.

The *hastati*, therefore, were organized in fifteen maniples of sixty-two men, 930 in all, the *principes* in another fifteen maniples of sixty-two men, a further 930; the third rank consisted of fifteen *ordines*, or lines of battle, each consisting of three *vexilla* (= maniples) of sixty-two men, i.e. a further 2,790 men. This gives a legionary total of 4,650: when the 300 cavalry are added, the resultant figure, 4,950, is close enough to Livy's 5,000.

The early and middle Republic

It was traditionally during the siege of Veii that the men first began to be paid. Though this probably was not then intended as a permanent feature, it was inevitable that as warfare ceased to be an annual summer event and became frequently continuous, payment should become normal. At about the same time, or shortly afterwards, the army was improved by the adoption of new weapons and internal reorganization. For defence the *scutum*, which had already been adopted by the men of the second class became general in place of the *clipeus*, while the *hasta* was superseded by a new offensive weapon, the *pilum*. The *pilum* may have been borrowed from Rome's antagonists – the Romans were traditionally quick to imitate, but slow to invent - or it may have emerged from a development of the native Roman *verutum*. Thanks to the introduction of the *pilum* the Romans were able to abandon the traditional Greek method of hoplite fighting and make the Macedonian phalanx obsolete. Parker believes that this was a gradual process, and that in the organization of the army described in Livy VIII the

first two lines, the *hastati* and *principes*, were armed with the *pilum* and organized in maniples, the third line continuing as a phalanx armed with the *hasta*. If Parker is right it is curious that the *hastati* were so called in spite of not being armed with the *hasta*.

By this time the Roman army in most years consisted of four legions, divided into two armies, of which each was commanded by a consul. There were twenty-four military tribunes, six to each legion, fourteen of whom according to Polybius (VI 19, 2–5) had seen five years' service and ten as much as ten years. He writes:

A cavalry soldier has to serve ten years in all and an infantry soldier sixteen years before reaching the age of forty-six, with the exception of those whose census is below 400 drachmas, all of whom are employed in naval service. In cases of emergency, twenty years' service is required from the infantry. No one may hold any political office before he has completed ten years' service.

The navy, which always remained very much the junior service, was essentially a creation of the Punic Wars.

Polybius (VI 19,8; 21,3; VI 21, 6–25) also describes a most elaborate method of appointing military tribunes and selecting the men, which, as Parker says, 'resembled picking up sides for a game':

The four tribunes named first are posted to the first legion, the next three to the second, the following four to the third, and the last three to the fourth. The first two of the senior tribunes are posted to the first legion, the next three to the second, the next two to the third, and the last three to the fourth. After the distribution and posting of officers has been made so that each legion has the same number of officers, those of each legion take their seats in separate groups, and they draw lots for the tribes, and summon them individually in the order of the draw. From each tribe they first select four young men of more or less the same age and build. When these are brought forward the officers of the first legion have the first choice, those of the second the second choice, those of the third next choice, and those of the fourth take the last. Another batch of four is then brought forward, and this time the officers of the second legion have the first choice and so on, those of the first now being the last to choose. A third group is now brought forward and this time the tribunes of the third legion choose first, and those of the second last. By continuing in this way to give each legion first choice in turn, each legion gets men of the

same quality. When they have chosen the number decided upon – that is when the strength of each legion is brought up to 4,200 or in times of special danger to 5,000 – the former practice was to choose the cavalry after the 4,200 infantry, but now they choose them first, the censor selecting them according to their wealth, and 300 are posted to each legion.

When the enrolment has been made in this way, those of the tribunes responsible for this task in each legion assemble the newly enrolled soldiers, and selecting from them all one single man, the one whom they think the most suitable, they make him take the oath that he will obey his officers and execute their orders as far as lies in his power. Then the others come forward and each in his turn takes the oath, swearing that he will do the same as the first man.

Not content with this time-consuming procedure, the tribunes are as long-winded in mobilizing the army:

The tribunes in Rome, once they have administered the oath, appoint for each legion a day and a place at which the men are to present themselves without arms, and then dismiss them. When they arrive at the appointed place, they choose the youngest and least wealthy to form the *velites*, or light-armed troops; those next to them are appointed *hastati*. Men who are at the peak of their powers are made *principes*, and the oldest soldiers *triarii*. (These are the titles used by the Romans for the four classes in each legion, which all differ in age and equipment.) They divide them up so that the senior men known as *triarii* number 600, the *principes* 1,200, the *hastati* 1,200, all the rest, who are the youngest, being *velites* (1,200). If the legion consists of more than 4,000 men, they divide them up in the same proportions, apart from the *triarii*, the number of whom is always the same.

The youngest soldiers, the *velites*, have to carry a sword, light javelins, and a light shield (*parma*). The shield is circular, stoutly made, and three feet in diameter, and thus large enough to afford protection. They also have a plain helmet, which is sometimes covered with a wolf's skin, or something like it, both to give more protection and to make it more easy for their officers to recognize them. The wooden shaft of the javelin (*hasta velitaris*) is about two cubits long, and a finger's breadth in thickness; its head is a span in length, beaten out and sharpened to a fine point, so that it is inevitably bent by the first impact, and the enemy is unable to return it. Otherwise the same weapon would be available for

both sides.

The next group in seniority, the *hastati*, have to wear complete armour. Their equipment consists of a shield (*scutum*) with a convex surface, measuring two and a half feet in width and four feet in length, with a thickness at the rim of a palm's breadth. It is made of two pieces of wood glued together. The outer surface is covered with canvas and has calfskin on top. It has a reinforcement at top and bottom consisting of an iron edging, which has a dual function – it protects the shield from sword blows from above, and also from damage from the ground. In the centre is an iron boss (*umbo*) which turns aside stones and blows from pikes and heavy missiles. In addition to the shield they wear a sword on the right thigh. This they call a Spanish sword. This sword is both effective for thrusting and has two first-class cutting edges, as the blade is both strong and firm. The *hastati* also carry two heavy javelins (*pila*), a bronze helmet, and greaves. The *pila* are of two kinds, heavy and light. Some of the heavy *pila* are round and three cubits long, and a palm in diameter, others are a palm square. The light *pila* are like reasonably sized hunting spears, the length of the shaft being the same three cubits. They are all fitted with an iron head as long as the shaft. This is attached so firmly to the shaft, being halfway let into the shaft, and fastened with numerous rivets, that in action the iron will break sooner than become separated, though its thickness at the bottom where it meets the wood is about one and a half fingers; so careful are they to attach it firmly. Finally they wear as a decoration on top of the helmet a circle of feathers, with three upright black or purple feathers about a cubit in height. These mounted above their other arms make every man look twice his real height, and give him a striking appearance, and help to strike terror into the enemy. The ordinary soldiers also wear a breastplate of bronze about nine inches square, which they place in front of the heart and call the heart-protector (*pectorale*), thus completing their armament. Those whose census is above 10,000 drachmas wear instead a coat of mail (*lorica*). The *principes* and *triarii* are similarly armed, except that instead of *pila* the *triarii* carry long spears (*hastae*).

From each of the classes except the most junior they select ten centurions on merit, and then select a second ten. These are all called centurions, but only those selected first have a seat on the military council. The centurions then appoint an equal number of deputies (*optiones*). Next, together with the centurions, they divide each class into ten centuries, except the *velites*, and assign to each manipule two centurions and two *optiones* from among the elected officers. The *velites*

are divided equally among all the companies; these companies are called *ordines* or *manipuli* or *vexilla*, and their officers are called centurions or *ordinum ductores*. Finally, the centurions appoint from the ranks two of the best and bravest soldiers to be standard-bearers (*signiferi*) in each maniple. It is reasonable that they appoint two commanders for each maniple; for it is uncertain what an officer may do or what may happen to him, and since warfare does not admit of excuses, they desire the maniple never to be without a leader. When both centurions are available, the senior centurion (*centurio prior*) commands the right half of the maniple and the junior (*centurio posterior*) the left, but if only one is present he commands the whole. Centurions are expected to be not so much adventurers as dependable and sound leaders, who will not so much initiate attacks and begin the fighting, as hold their ground when under difficulties and be prepared to die at their posts.

In the same way they divide the cavalry into ten squadrons (*turmae*), and from each they select three officers (*decuriones*), who themselves appoint three deputies (*optiones*). The senior decurion (the one first chosen) commands the whole squadron, and the two others also have the rank of decurion. If the senior decurion is not present, the next in line commands the squadron. The cavalry are now armed like those of Greece, but in former times they had no cuirasses, but only light undergarments ; they were thus able to mount and dismount with great ease and dexterity, but were also exposed to great danger in combat, as they were all but naked. Their lances also were unsuitable in two respects. In the first place, they were so light and pliant that it was hardly possible to take a steady aim, and before the iron tip became fixed in anything, the shaking due to the motion of the horse caused most of them to break. Secondly, since they were without spikes at the butt-end, they could only deliver the initial stroke with the point, and if they broke they were unfit for further service. Their shields were made of ox-hide, of an appearance similar to the round cakes used at sacrifices. They were of no use for attacking for they were not firm enough, and when the leather covering peeled off, rotted by the rain, though they were hardly serviceable before, they were entirely unserviceable then. Since their arms did not stand the test, they began to make them in the Greek fashion, which requires that the first stroke of the lance be well aimed and forceful, since the lance is made to be steady and strong, and also can be effectively used by reversing it and striking with the point at the butt-end. The same applies to the Greek shields, which being both solid and strong, are serviceable both against attack from a distance and

assault at close quarters.

Polybius proceeds to describe the system of mobilization; each consul appoints a separate meeting place, for he had his own share of the allies and two Roman legions. The allies are commanded by officers appointed by the consuls, who are called *praefecti sociorum* and are twelve in number. These officers select from the entire force of allies the best of the cavalymen and infantrymen, called *extraordinarii*. The number of allied infantry is normally equal to that of the legions, whereas the cavalry are three times as many. About a third of the cavalry and a fifth of the infantry are in the *extraordinarii*, the select corps; the rest are divided into two bodies, the right wing and the left wing.

Polybius goes on to describe the construction of a Roman camp, or more strictly, the half of a four-legion camp. In his day, the two-legion camp of a single consular army must have been normal, though no doubt the handbooks of castrametation still concerned themselves with the four-legion camp of an army commanded by both consuls. His description of the contemporary Roman camp has given rise to a vast literature from the fifteenth century onwards. Walbank believes that the most satisfactory explanation so far is that of P. Fraccaro who suggests that Polybius had before him a Roman vade-mecum containing a plan of a camp, and that such a work would naturally give the typical form. The 'typical' camp would still be the four-legion camp; but Polybius describes only one half of it. The other half is then made identical, but back to back, with only the base line in common. Polybius writes:

When both consuls with all their four legions are united in one camp, we need only imagine two camps like the one described placed back to back. The *extra-ordinarii* infantry of each camp we have described as being at the rearward *agger* of the camp. These then form the junction, and the camp is now oblong, its area being double what it had been, and the circumference half as much again.

Thepraetorium, the commander's tent, was the first to be erected, with the tribunes' tents forming a single line in front of the *praetorium*, fifty feet from it and facing it. The maniples were arranged in blocks behind the tribunes' tents, with in each maniple the end tent being occupied by the centurions. The areas to right and left of the *praetorium* were used for the market on one side and the office of the *quaestor* (quartermaster) on the other.

In general, it is remarkable how similar the Polybian camp was to the later imperial one. This is a further instance of Roman conservatism. The major difference is that whereas the imperial camp was the familiar playing-card shape, Polybius describes the camp of his day as a square. In practice it may have been nearer to a rectangle.

Polybius next outlines the arrangements for guard duties. Each tribune has two guards, one stationed in front of his tent and the other in the rear, with each guard consisting of four men. Guard duties for the infantry were undertaken by the *hastati* and *principes*. Since each tribune had command of four maniples, the incidence of guard duty cannot have been heavy. Guards for the cavalry were supplied by the *triarii*. Finally, each maniple in turn provided the guard for the general's tent.

Elaborate precautions were made for the security of the password. One man was selected from the tenth maniple of each class of infantry and cavalry, and was relieved from all other guard duty; instead, he attended every day at sunset at his tribune's tent, and received from him the watchword, the *tessera*. This was a wooden tablet, almost certainly waxed. The guard handed the tablet to the commander of the next maniple, who in turn passed it to the one next to him. This was repeated until the password reached the first maniples, i.e. those whose tents were near to the tent of the tribune. Before dark the password had to be handed back to the tribune. Therefore, if all the tablets issued were returned, the tribune knew that the password had been given to all the maniples. If any one was missing, an inquiry began and whoever was responsible was appropriately punished. The procedure in the imperial army was simpler, in so far as the responsibility was entrusted to one man in each century who was given the rank of *tesserarius*. By that date he received, probably, pay and a half.

The *velites* had the duty of guarding the perimeter. They were posted every day along the *vallum*, and ten of them were on guard at each entrance. Visiting rounds was the responsibility of the legionary cavalry. The decurion of the first *turma* in each legion had to give orders early in the day to one of his *optiones* to arrange for four men to visit rounds. This was repeated next day by the decurion of the second *turma* and so on. The four men chosen each day drew lots for their respective watches and went to the tribune on duty to obtain written orders which specified those stations they were to visit, and at what time. They then positioned themselves near the first maniple of the *triarii*, for the beginning of each watch was announced by a bugle-call from their guard station. When his time came, the man responsible for visiting rounds made it accompanied by friends as witnesses. He visited all the posts mentioned in his orders. If he

found the guards on the first watch awake, he received their *tessera*; if not, or if he found that a sentry had left his post, he asked those with him to witness the fact, and proceeded on his rounds. All those who visited rounds brought back the *tesserae* to the tribune on duty at daybreak. If there were fewer *tesserae* than the number of posts visited, the tribune examined the *tesserae* to see which one was missing, and then summoned the centurion of the maniple concerned, and held a confrontation of the men on sentry duty with the pickets visiting rounds. If a sentry was found guilty he was condemned to the *fustuarium*; that is, he was cudgelled by men from his own unit and usually killed. If not, he was given a discharge with ignominy, and would not find life easy thereafter. The same punishment was inflicted on the *optio* and the decurion of the *turma*, if they did not give out the proper orders at the right time, or pass them on to the next *turma*. Since the penalty was both immediate and severe, the watches were normally well kept.

Punishments were not limited to individual soldiers. A tribune, or in the cases of the allies a *praefectus*, had the power to inflict fines, demand sureties, and to flog. The *fustuarium* was also the punishment for stealing anything from the camp, or for giving false evidence. It was imposed on men for gross immorality, and on anyone who had already been punished three times for the same offence. These offences were treated as crimes; other offences were considered as equally serious, as when a man boasted falsely of his own courage in order to win a distinction, when men left in a covering force abandoned their station through fear, or when a man through panic threw away his weapons in battle. So men in covering forces preferred death to dishonour, and in battle men who lost a shield or sword often hurled themselves into the midst of the enemy, in the hope either of recovering what they had lost or of escaping through death inevitable disgrace. If an entire unit deserted its post, the *fustuarium* was not imposed on them all but an equally terrible punishment instead. One tenth of the offenders were selected by lot to undergo *fustuarium*; the remainder were made to receive rations of barley instead of wheat, and to encamp outside the camp in an unprotected area. This sometimes continued over a long period.

Besides punishments, there were, of course, incentives. It was required of every man that in battle he should fight to the best of his ability, but in skirmishes or minor engagements, where there was no necessity for engaging in single combat, some men performed actions beyond the sphere of duty. The usual reward for bravery was to award a man who had wounded an enemy, a spear, the *hasta pura*: to one who had killed and

stripped an enemy, a decoration if he was an infantryman, horse trappings if a cavalryman. The first man to climb the wall of a city under siege received a *corona muralis*, or crown of gold, a soldier who saved the life of a fellow-citizen (Polybius includes allies) might receive a *corona civica*, or crown of oak-leaves.

Pay

Polybius next states the daily pay for soldiers at this period (probably his own time) : two obols a day for the infantryman, twice as much for a centurion, and a *drachma* for a cavalryman. Since there were normally six obols to the *drachma*, it would appear that the cavalryman's pay included the cost of keeping his horse; otherwise he would have been receiving three times the pay of an infantryman, and half as much again as a centurion. But what did Polybius mean by a *drachma*? It is usually taken to be the equivalent of a *denarius*, but that involves difficulties. One problem is that the soldier would then receive one third of a *denarius* a day. At this date there were ten sextantal *asses* to the *denarius*, which would leave the infantryman with three and a third *asses* a day. A daily rate should be one easily reckoned and this is a most unlikely number. The alternative is to adopt the suggestion first made by H. Mattingly (*JRS* 1937, 102) that two obols represented two librai *asses*, i.e. two *sestertii* (the *denarius* then being the equivalent of four *sestertii* or ten sextantal *asses*). His solution would provide for the infantryman five *asses*, for the centurion one *denarius*, and for the cavalryman one and a half *denarii* daily. It is usual for this period to assume a 360-day year. So long as ten *asses* were reckoned to the *denarius* it meant that the pay on an annual basis would be for the infantryman 180 *denarii*, for the centurion 360 *denarii*, and for the cavalryman 540 *denarii*. This is borne out by the allies' pay, which was the same for the infantry as for the Romans: in the case of the cavalry the pay seems to have been the same as that of the infantry, but with the addition of a free allowance of one and a third *medimni* of wheat (= about a bushel) and five *medimni* of barley (about four bushels). When the *as* was retariffed at sixteen to the *denarius*, the basic legionary pay would fall to 112½ *denarii*; when Caesar doubled the pay the annual rate became 225 *denarii*, and it remained at this level until the time of Domitian. This theory has the advantage of accounting for the few pieces of clear evidence that we possess: (i) that the rate in the time of Polybius was two obols a day ; (ii)

that the *as* was later retariffed at sixteen to the *denarius*; (iii) that Caesar doubled the pay; (iv) that in the time of Augustus the annual rate was 225 *denarii*. The retariffing of the *as* would at first sight imply a severe reduction in the living standards of the soldier until the later increase by Caesar. Whether this was the case or not depends really on the net total remaining after all compulsory deductions had been made. Polybius tells us that the *quaestor* deducted the price fixed for the men's corn and clothes and any additional arms they may have required. These deductions may have been substantial; Parker believes that they could have amounted to more than half the man's gross pay, although the position might have been mitigated by a *lex militaris* of C. Gracchus, which allowed for a free issue of clothing.

In spite of the award of pay, the Roman legions were as yet by no means a professional army, but continued as legions enrolled each year with no doubt numerous changes in personnel and still in theory a citizen militia of peasant smallholders.

The Marian reforms

The aftermath of the Punic and Macedonian wars left the Roman economy divided between wealthy landlords, with cheap and plentiful slave labour, and a body of small-holders who found it increasingly difficult to compete and who, driven by necessity, migrated to Rome to join the urban poor. Fewer and fewer men now had the property still required for service in the legions, and gradually the rules were relaxed or ignored. One solution would have been to extend the franchise to the allies, but to this the senate was opposed. The Gracchi did attempt to secure agrarian reform, but their defeat left the impoverished smallholders and the Roman poor in as bad a position as before.

Marius is credited with changing the system, but though his efforts were undoubtedly decisive, they did no more than accelerate, and make final, army reforms that were already beginning. The first and most important is that he opened recruitment to the *capite censi*, thus at one stroke ending the class-division of the legions. At the same time, recruits were now enrolled for a definite period of service ; the army was now becoming professional (see Parker, 1928, 24; but also Smith, 1958, 29, note 1). This not unnaturally raised the army to a much higher level of efficiency. The other side of the coin was that by changing the rules and enlisting men on his

own initiative Marius established a precedent which ambitious senators were quick to imitate, and which was partly responsible for the civil wars of the first century BC. The army before Marius had been a national army, now it became a succession of armies which owed loyalty, not to the state, but each to its own army commander. This was exacerbated by the extraordinary commands given to Pompey and Caesar.

The second reform ascribed to Marius is one of tactics. The army of the second century BC had been based upon the maniples, and the arrangement had proved highly successful against the Macedonian phalanx. The Cimbri and the Teutones, who attacked with a strong assault at the start of the battle, proved to be too strong for the manipular system. Since between each maniples in the first line there was a gap as wide as the maniples itself, the Cimbri went straight through the gaps, and attacked the second line in the first onslaught. Marius, therefore, decided to strengthen his front line by increasing the size of the tactical units from maniples to cohorts, and reducing the gaps between them. Henceforward the cohort of six centuries became the tactical unit, and the maniples became obsolete. Organization by cohorts was not entirely new; Polybius mentions them in his account of P. Scipio's campaign against Indibilis, but he omits them from his description of the organization of the legion. It seems likely, therefore, that it was Scipio who experimented with the cohortal formation, but Marius who adopted it.

One result of the change from maniples to cohorts was that the division into *hastati*, *principles* and *triarii* became obsolete. The names were now used for distinguishing the various centurions, with *triarii* being omitted, and replaced by its equivalent, *pilani*. Since the *pilani* had been the most experienced men, their name was now used for the senior centurions in each cohort, while the *hastate*, who had been the youngest troops, were designated the junior. The *principles* gave their name to those in between. The ranking of centurions was now, in order of seniority in each cohort from II to X, *pilus prior*, *princeps prior*, *hastatus prior*, *pilus posterior*, *princeps posterior*, *hastatus posterior*. The titles of centurions in the first cohort, who now became called the *primi ordines*, were slightly different : *primus pilus*, *princeps*, *hastatus*, *princeps posterior*, *hastatus posterior*. It is not clear whether at this date the first cohort had five centurions, as in the empire, or six (i.e. two *primi pili*). The reduction to five was probably due to the *primus pilus bis* (i.e. for the second time) being too useful as a staff officer.

The third of Marius' innovations was to make each legion a recognizable unit, with its own identity, and one for which its members might feel more

esprit de corps. From now on each legion had its *aquila*, or eagle, which was kept in a little chapel, and honoured as the *numen legionis*.

Other reforms of Marius were the disappearance of the *velites*, and the abolition of the legionary cavalry. Both were natural consequences of the abolition of the class divisions within the legions. The task of the *velites* could be done more effectively by foreign mercenaries, such as Balearic slingers. Roman cavalry had never been outstanding, and here again non-Romans proved more useful. It is noteworthy that Caesar used exclusively *equites* from Gaul, Spain and Germany, and this practice continued in the imperial army. There were still *equites* within the legion, perhaps 120 in all, but they were no longer organized as a tactical unit.

In weaponry the *hasta* was finally replaced by the *pilum*, so that there was uniform equipment throughout the legion, and the last traces of the phalanx organization were eliminated. *Hastati* nevertheless remained as one of the titles for centurions, in accordance with Roman traditionalism. Modifications were, however, made to the *pilum*. In the time of Polybius the shank was driven halfway into the handle and fixed with numerous rivets, so that it would break sooner than become separated. Sometime between Polybius and Marius the number of rivets was reduced to two. Marius substituted for one of the iron rivets a wooden one. The object was to ensure that when the *pilum* struck an enemy shield the wooden pin would break and the weapon be bent so that it would be difficult to remove it from the shield. Caesar improved upon this by leaving the metal of the shank beneath the head of the *pilum* untempered, so that the metal itself would bend, and make it impossible for the *pilum* to be withdrawn from the shield. In addition, Marius is reported to have devised a scheme whereby a soldier was able to remove his pack without taking off his armour. In spite of this, the nickname ‘*muli Marian*’ (Marius' mules) was adopted by the troops to describe the burdensome nature of carrying the pack. Finally, as a result of the Social War, the grant of citizenship to Italians meant the elimination of the *Socii*, and the extension of the legionary recruiting area to all Italy south of the Po. The Roman army was thereafter composed of legions and *auxilia* ([Part 3, Chapter 3](#)), who as non-Romans were of lower status.

The Civil Wars

The Civil Wars had the effect of multiplying the number of legions

considerably. It was still normal practice to reserve numbers one to four for the consular legions, but each of the war-lords then began his own enumeration. Finally, at Actium, Antony had thirty-one legions, of which nineteen were in the land army, eight in the fleet, and four left behind in Egypt. Octavian had between forty and forty-five. So after the victory Octavian had an army consisting of more than sixty legions. He gradually reduced the number to twenty-eight by 16 BC, and it was further reduced by the loss of legions XVII, XVIII, XIX in the Varian disaster, which meant a total of twenty-five legions at the death of Augustus.

The great problem left by the reforms of Marius had been that with the lessening of the importance of the consuls, and the increasing power of the great commanders, the soldiers tended to look towards their generals rather than the state for donations and land grants on demobilization. Since each army owed its allegiance to its commander, the great commanders tended to act as war-lords, each with his own sphere of influence. The Civil Wars were therefore inevitable.

· THE · IMPERIAL · ARMY ·

Alistair Scott Anderson

The military superiority that had won Rome vast overseas territories by the late Republic was the result of a long evolution, noticeably accelerated during the Augustan age. Working upon the foundations so ably laid by Gaius Marius and Julius Caesar, Augustus set about organizing a new army that could fulfil the requirements of an expanded Roman world and support the new imperial system. In this, two objectives were paramount: the defence of the Empire and the security of his own position. His arrangements, a model for numerous successors, took due account of worthy tradition yet for the most part showed an originality that was to be both successful and lasting, and produced a professional organization that remained almost unaltered for two centuries.

After Actium (31 BC) Augustus (then Octavian) inherited parts of sixty to seventy legions. Casualties incurred in the civil wars meant that most of these legions were not at full strength but they still represented an army of over a quarter of a million men. Some had formed Augustus' own army but many had supported his opponents. It was a legacy of decades of intermittent military and political unrest and the victorious Augustus quickly reduced the size of the army to twenty-five, or -six, legions (to be raised to twenty-eight by 25 BC) in an effort to create a standing force of manageable size. This new legionary force comprised somewhat more than 150,000 men. The number of legionaries, although seemingly small when considered in relation to the expanse of the empire that they were to defend, was based upon calculations of what was both militarily and politically sound. The army had to be large enough to protect the empire yet not so big that it presented a security risk to the emperor himself; too

many soldiers in a single province offered a tempting prize to any usurper willing to take up arms against Augustus. Another consideration was the flow of manpower into the legions in peacetime. By admitting *proletarii* into the legions the reforms of Gaius Marius had been instrumental in the replacement of the conscript militia by a volunteer army and, although conscription remained an alternative in times of emergency, Augustus realized the advantages of a professional volunteer army. A volunteer was much less likely to join in sedition against the emperor, a desirable objective, yet Augustus foresaw that without the incentive of additional income from campaign booty the number of volunteers in peacetime might not meet the requirements of a larger military establishment. Finally, the logistics of maintaining a standing army had to be judged against both the capability of the primitive agricultural system of the empire to feed the troops, and the limits of fiscal wealth to pay them.

Augustus realized that ultimately the position of any emperor relied on the support of the army and the safety of his empire could only be guaranteed by an efficient military presence. Accordingly he introduced several measures to regularize service conditions, to provide recruitment incentives and to bind the loyalty of the army to his own person. It was, he hoped, to be a lifelong loyalty, for he:

standardized the pay and allowances of the entire army – at the same time fixing the period of service and the bounty due on its completion – according to military rank; this would discourage them from revolting, when back in civil life, on the excuse that they were either too old or had insufficient capital to earn an honest living (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 49).

During the later Republic it had become standard practice to give legionary veterans allotments of land on discharge. Such practice was unpopular with the Senate as it meant either the wholesale confiscation of land or enormous expenditure to purchase it. Consequently it was often left to individual generals to find land, or money for purchase, for their men. This practice, so crucial in the erosion of senatorial power in the late Republic, as it encouraged the troops in loyalty to their commander rather than to the state, was avidly pursued by Augustus. In the years immediately following Actium, Augustus demobilized more than one hundred thousand veterans, settling them in a series of new or older established colonies in Italy and the provinces. Most of the finance for this came from Augustus' own personal fortune, confiscated from the Egyptian state treasury in 30 BC, and he claimed to have spent 600,000,000 *sesterces* in Italy and

260,000,000 in the provinces on land purchases for the colonists (*Res Gestae*, 16). In addition to land grants, the veterans received other advantages, for even in the provinces many of the *coloniae* were granted the *ius Italicum* which exempted the *coloni* from land-tax (*tributum soli*) and poll-tax (*tributum capitis*) (Part 6, Chapter 15).

Such measures undoubtedly gained Augustus the loyalty he desired as the future of each soldier, in his retirement, was bound to the emperor's generosity. Land allotments also maintained recruitment since each soldier knew what to expect as a reward for his service. The legal right to a discharge award was further formalized in 13 BC when land grants were abandoned in favour of a cash gratuity which by AD 5 had been fixed at a total of 3,000 *denarii* per legionary. Many of Augustus' veteran settlements had been a direct result of the post-civil war demobilizations and an attempt to forget such unhappy times, coupled with difficulties in administration and a shortage of land, may have prompted this change in practice.

After carrying such a vast financial burden on his own shoulders for so many years, in AD 6 he transferred the responsibility for soldiers' discharge awards to the state. This was accomplished by the creation of a new military treasury (*aerarium militare*). To start it Augustus made a personal contribution of 170,000,000 *sesterces* and to provide for its continuing revenue he instituted a 5 per cent tax on inheritances and a 1 per cent tax on auction sales. Cash grants must have been welcomed by urban recruits who did not possess agricultural backgrounds but several first-century emperors saw the advantages of *coloniae* as bastions of Roman civilization in the provinces and the reversion to colonial land allotments for veterans was a common occurrence. Even as early as AD 14 soldiers were complaining of being given allotments on unsuitable land in remote countries. For the settlers in the Claudian *colonia* at Camulodunum, the Boudiccan rebellion proved conditions there to be even more unfavourable.

Augustus' financial arrangements in this sphere were not confined to the regularisation of discharge benefits. Another important measure which made army life more inviting awarded each soldier control over his individual property, his *peculium castrense*; under normal Roman law the head of the family (*paterfamilias*) was the sole legal person able, not only to own property, but also to dispose of it.

Many of Augustus' military reforms were directed towards service in the legions but his total military establishment involved more than this traditional infantry force. To provide military strength in areas where trouble could most be expected and in an effort to lessen the outward

display of his military power in Rome, where republican sympathies ran high, the legions were stationed mainly in the frontier provinces. This left the defence of Italy to other forces.

The navy fulfilled part of this role, based at Misenum on the Bay of Naples and on the Adriatic coast at Ravenna. Other fleets were based at Seleucia Pieria in Syria, Alexandria in Egypt, Fréjus in southern France and on the Rhine and Danube. However more important for the security of the peninsula was the Praetorian Guard, which became one of the most esteemed and influential branches of the army, especially in the field of imperial politics, until it was finally abolished by Constantine some three and a half centuries later.

The Praetorian Guard, made up of Roman citizens, formed the imperial bodyguard and was based on the personal escorts of late Republican generals such as Marius, Caesar and Antony. Augustus' guard was made up of nine cohorts each comprised of six centuries. In order to prevent danger to himself and, because the stationing of such a large body of troops in the capital would have been decidedly un-republican, only three cohorts were based in Rome with the other six stationed in nearby Italian towns. At first each cohort was under the command of a tribune with Augustus himself as overall commander. But from 2 BC command of the guard was entrusted to two *praefecti praetorio* of equestrian rank and on most occasions this duality of command was maintained. The praetorians were specially picked and enjoyed numerous privileges in terms of pay and promotions, for example to legionary centurionates. In 13 BC their length of service was fixed at twelve years which was increased to sixteen years in 5 BC. Originally their pay appears to have been 375 *denarii* a year, but by the end of Augustus' reign it had risen to 750 and then to 1,000 under Domitian. This was much more than legionary pay, as was their retirement gratuity, which Augustus fixed at 5,000 *denarii*. In his will he left the praetorians 250 *denarii* each against the legionaries' 75 per man.

The praetorians protected the emperor in Rome and accompanied him or members of the imperial family on campaign and occasionally formed additional reserves for important military expeditions. Their presence in Rome also gave them a unique influence in the choice of future emperors. Gaius raised the number of praetorian cohorts to twelve and, in AD 69, because of their support for Otho, Vitellius cashiered the members of the guards and replaced them with sixteen cohorts taken from the German legions. Vespasian reduced the number to nine although, probably in the reign of Domitian, this was increased to ten. The guard was disbanded in 312.

An important innovation in the establishment of Augustus' new army was the cre-ation of numerous auxiliary units. The use of non-citizen allied forces to supplement Rome's own armies had a long tradition and became commonplace during the civil war. They provided specialist troops, such as archers and cavalry, areas in which legionary strength was deficient. Augustus viewed these forces in a different light to his predecessors, envisaging a role which was to give them a permanent place in his new military establishment. Accordingly the number of these auxiliaries was increased to about 150,000, similar to the legionary strength. However, unlike the legions, these soldiers were organized into units each approximately five hundred men strong. Several units were assigned to each legion and some provinces were garrisoned entirely by these *auxilia*. Indeed, to many provincials it was these non-citizen auxiliaries who became the public face of Rome, as they were gradually stationed in a series of small garrison forts throughout the empire. However, in the early imperial period, in terms of pay, status and overall military planning, for those outside the Praetorian Guard, the legions remained the most important branch of the services.

The Augustan legions were numbered from I to XXII and each bore a title, which helped differentiate it from others with the same number. Presumably Augustus retained legions that had belonged to his former colleagues in the triumvirate, Mark Antony and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus ; the army of the latter transferred its loyalty to Octavian in 36 BC, and four numbers are duplicated: *IV Macedonica* and *IV Sythica*, *V Alaudae* and *V Macedonica*, *VI Ferrata* and *VI Victrix*, and *X Gemina* and *X Fretensis* and one is triplicated : *III Augusta*, *III Cyrenaica* and *III Gallica*. Some of these titles, such as 'Augusta', were undoubtedly official in origin but others like that of the *IX Hispana* were presumably acquired from the name of a province where the unit served with distinction. In some cases a nickname sufficed, an example being the *cognomen* of the *V Alaudae* (the larks), a legion raised by Julius Caesar. Later emperors raised legions either to replace those lost in battle or to add to legionary strength, usually before a specific campaign or to counter some new threat. The nomenclature of these new creations can be indicative of origin, for example, *I Italica* was raised by Nero from Italian-born recruits and *I*, *II* and *III Parthica* were raised by Septimius Severus for his campaigns in the east. The raising of *XXX Ulpia victrix* by Trajan suggests that at the time of its formation, twenty-nine other legions were in existence. In fact, over the first two hundred years of empire the number of legions remained relatively stable, usually numbering around the twenty-eight originally envisaged by

Augustus.

The rewards due to legionaries on their discharge must have seemed more than generous to new recruits but to qualify for a land grant or a cash payment the legionary had first to fulfil his term of service. In 13 BC Augustus fixed the length of service at sixteen years – the usual obligation of a citizen in the Republic. However, even after this period of service many legionaries were to be kept in the legions for a further four years as *evocati*, exempted from routine duties, in a special cohort under its own commander, the *curator veteranorum*. Later by AD 6, this length of service was extended to twenty years *sub aquila*, as a normal soldier and five years in a veteran corps. In the Flavian period the veteran corps was abolished and twenty-five years became the standard legionary service requirement.

The Augustan legionary received pay of 225 *denarii* a year from which deductions were made for food, clothing and arms. Domitian increased this to 300 *denarii* per annum and it remained at this level until a further increase under Septimius Severus. This was the basic pay and was occasionally supplemented by special bonuses or donatives, such as the 75 *denarii* left to each legionary in Augustus' will. From the time of Claudius each emperor paid the army a donative at the time of his accession. Of course there were also different pay grades within the legion with, even in Augustus' time, centurions' pay ranging from about 3,750 to 15,000 *denarii* per annum depending upon the grade of the centurion.

In addition to a retirement grant and regular pay, the legionary also received medical care and the opportunity to learn various trades. For those from the lower levels of society, service with the legions provided a career-security unknown in civilian life and such attractions resulted in a high level of voluntary recruitment into the legions serving in the west. In the Augustan period Italy still provided most of their recruits, with Cisalpine Gaul being a particularly important recruiting area. However, even at this time a significant number came from southern Gaul and some from southern Spain, both areas containing large numbers of Roman citizens, to whom legionary service was restricted. As the century wore on and the franchise spread, fewer and fewer Italians enlisted, as service and eventual settlement in the distant frontier provinces became less attractive. Their place was eagerly filled by citizens born outside Italy. Probably as many as half the legionaries in the Claudian army which invaded Britain in AD 43 were of Italian origin, yet by the Antonine period the provincialization of the western legions was complete, with Italians forming only a small minority.

In contrast the legions in the eastern provinces were recruited from the

local populations, even in the Augustan period. Conscription was often used rather than voluntary recruitment and when necessary Roman citizenship was awarded on recruitment to comply with legal requirements for enlistment. Even here, though, not all rules could be bent to suit the requirements of military manpower. Legionaries were supposed to be freeborn Roman citizens. Citizenship could be awarded but the status of the freeborn could not, as is obvious from the correspondence between Trajan and Pliny, his governor in Bithynia. In a letter to the emperor Pliny complains that two slaves have been discovered among a batch of legionary recruits and asks Trajan for his advice on the procedure for dealing with the problem. Trajan's reply illustrates the magnitude of the problem:

If they are conscripts, then the blame falls on the recruiting officer; if substitutes, then those who offered them as such are guilty ; but if they volunteered for service, well aware of their status then they will have to be executed. (Pliny, *Letters*, X, 29–30)

The organization of the legions in the early imperial period owed much to the reforms of Gaius Marius, with a legion being composed often cohorts. Of these, cohorts II to X were each made up of six centuries (totalling 480 men per cohort) while from early in the imperial period cohort I appears to have been organized on a different basis with, according to Hyginus, twice the strength of the others. Including officers, administrative staff and a detachment of 120 men who acted as mounted despatch riders, each legion had a total establishment of about 6,000.

Under Augustus and his successors the command structure of the army was noticeably different from its republican counterpart. The consular and proconsular armies of earlier times now came under the direct control of the princeps and an early Augustan reform was the installation of a single commander over each legion, replacing the authority of the *tribuni militum* of whom there had been six to a legion, commanding in pairs for periods of two months at a time. This new commander was known as the *legatus legionis*. Caesar had sometimes used *legati* to command individual legions but it was under Augustus that the position of *legatus legionis* became established ; they came from men trusted by the emperor and at first from the ranks of ex-quaestors or ex-praetors, but, towards the late first century, usually only from the latter. Such men, if they served the emperor well, could look forward to becoming consul and a provincial governor later in their careers.

The six tribunates in each legion still existed but were now subordinate

to the *legatus legionis* and only one was manned by a potential senator, the other five going to equestrians. The former, the second in command of the legion and known as the *tribunus laticlavus*, was a young man in his early twenties who served a short term in a legion prior to entering the senate as a quaestor. This experience of army life was to train him for later command of a legion in a career that would span both civil and military positions. His equestrian colleagues, the *tribuni angusticlavii* were concerned largely with administrative duties. These men, usually in their thirties came from municipal magistracies or had commanded auxiliary cohorts. For those lucky or able enough the praefecture of an *ala* would follow.

Third in command was the *praefectus castrorum*. Normally a man of considerable military experience who had previously held the office of *primus pilus* (chief centurion), he was the senior professional officer in the legion. His responsibilities included building work, munitions and stores ; yet he commanded the legion in the absence of the *legatus* and senior tribune. Below the *praefectus castrorum* and the equestrian tribunes were the centurions and other ranks.

The principal professional soldiers in the Roman army were the centurions, each of whom commanded a century numbering eighty men. The centurions of each cohort, other than the first, were named in order of seniority (see p. 80 above). As in the army of the Republic, each centurion had an *optio* who, when accepted for promotion to the centurionate, but while waiting for a vacancy, bore the title *optio ad spem ordinis*.

Below the centurionate can be seen three main groups of soldiers in each century : *principales*, *immunes* and *milites*. Whether these groups were recognized as such before the early second century is doubtful but most of the positions held by men within each group date to much earlier times. Basically *principales* were non-commissioned officers receiving double the pay of a legionary (a *duplicarius*) or pay-and-a-half (a *sesquiplicarius*). *Immunes* were soldiers who received no more than basic pay but who were exempt from fatigues because they fulfilled special duties. *Milites* were the common legionaries available for general duties.

Within each century the *principales* consisted of the *signifier*, the *optio* and the *tesserarius*. The holding of one or all of these ranks was a normal step towards promotion into the centurionate. The *signifier* was the standard-bearer and also recorded and safeguarded the men's savings ; the *optio* as recorded above deputized for the centurion when he was away and assisted him in military matters and the *tesserarius* acted as an orderly sergeant, being responsible for guard duties and the daily 'watchword'.

Many legionaries had special skills or were trained in particular crafts.

Among these *immunes* were surveyors, architects, medical orderlies, smiths, roof-tile-makers, plumbers, stonecutters and woodcutters. Indeed much of the equipment used by each legion could be provided by its own resources. Apart from the manufacture and repair of weapons one of the main tasks involving *immunes* was the production of building materials. In the early stages of the conquest of a province, when legions were being moved from one fortress site to another, as frontiers moved forward and areas were pacified, timber formed the main building material. But from the mid-first century, with the recognition of certain sites as permanent military bases, brick, tile and stone were used in increasing quantities for building projects. Bricks and tiles bearing legionary name stamps are known from several provinces ; the earliest true name stamps appeared on tiles of *Legio IV Macedonica* c. AD 45–65, at Mainz.

A number of military tileries have been discovered, with the best known examples being the works depot of *Legio XX* at Holt some 15 km (9.5 miles) upstream from Chester and that of *Legio X* at Holdeurn, near Nijmegen in Holland. Unlike most civilian establishments, both sites are characterized by long banks of tile kilns rather than isolated examples. Production was presumably on a large scale to meet the heavy demands. It is a matter of conjecture as to who did most of the work at such depots – whether mainly soldiers or perhaps civilians supervised by small numbers of military personnel. Nevertheless at Holt a bath house and barrack blocks suggest staffing by soldiers and an inscription mentioning a master clay-worker, from Dobreta in Dacia, records him as being in charge of sixty soldiers. Clearly *immunes* were gainfully employed in the production of tiles and, in some instances, pottery. But what evidence there is suggests that most military tile production took place between June and October and it is probable that outside this period those whose expertise was in tile-making returned to normal duties or took up some other specialist occupation. For the *miles gregarius*, the common soldier who did not enjoy the benefits of an *immunis*, the daily routine could include guard duty, patrolling local roads, working in the baths or general fatigues.

Of overall importance was the staff of the legionary headquarters, the *tabularium legionis*; the *librarii*(clerks) and *exacti* (accountants) who formed this body were under the charge of the *cornicularius*. Most of these men were *immunes* and each was attached to one or other of a series of *officia*, of which within the legionary organization there were several, ranging from those of the equestrian tribunes through those increasingly larger of the *praefectus castrorum*, the *tribunus laticlavius* and the *legatus legionis*. Within each *officium* were the *beneficiarii* or personal orderlies

who took their seniority from that of the officer they served. Associated with the headquarters staff but outside the *official* was the *aquilifer*, who carried the eagle and ranked next to a centurion, and also the *imaginiferi* who carried the *imagines*, standards bearing representations of the reigning and past deified emperors.

The legions were basically heavy infantry regiments who fought in close order and with rigid discipline. Their equipment reflects this function. Over a short-sleeved, knee-length woollen tunic each legionary wore a cuirass of metal strips and plates (the *lorica segmentata*) which protected the upper part of the body. The narrow strips, which enclosed the rib-cage and the plates which covered the upper parts of the chest and back were hinged at the rear and tied and buckled with leather thongs and straps at the front; further narrow strips covered the shoulders. To assist articulation the strips seem to have been fastened to one another by leather 'webbing'. Numerous examples of the *lorica segmentata* appear on Trajan's Column but it is not certain when this type of armour was first introduced. The discovery of characteristic examples of the hinges, on military sites associated with the early conquest period in Britain, suggests that it was in extensive use by the 40s. For head protection the legionary wore a bronze helmet with an iron skull plate inside for added strength. The issue of a new helmet type was also taking place in the middle of the first century AD, with the style of the helmet being improved to give greater protection to the neck, ears and cheeks. On their feet, legionaries wore heavy leather sandals made up of several thicknesses of sole studded with hobnails.

The legionaries main long-range offensive weapon was the *pilum* (Chapter 5) or javelin, of which each man carried two. Below the hardened point of the *pilum* was an untempered iron shank, fitted into a heavy wooden stock. On contact with an adversary the soft shank bent and it could not be thrown back. When the *pilum* pierced a shield it was almost impossible to remove and the shield had to be discarded leaving the enemy unprotected. For close-quarters fighting the legionary was equipped with the *gladius*, a short sword, used mainly for thrusting, which was worn on the right side. This position was necessary as the left side of each man was masked by a large, curving rectangular shield, the *scutum*, which afforded maximum protection to the body.

Constant weapons training and manoeuvres made the Roman army proficient in the use of its equipment and encouraged military skills. As Josephus says: 'Their battle-drills are no different from the real thing; every man works as hard at his daily training as if he was on active service.' On both peacetime exercises and on campaign the building of defence works

was of paramount importance for:

The Romans never lay themselves open to a surprise attack ; for, whatever hostile territory they may invade, they engage in no battle until they have fortified their camp ... if the ground is uneven, it is first levelled ; a site for the camp is then measured out in the form of a square.

The interior of the camp is divided into rows of tents. The exterior circuit presents the appearance of a wall and is furnished with towers at regular intervals ; and on the spaces between the towers are placed 'quick-firers', catapults, 'stone-throwers', and every variety of artillery engines, all ready for use. In this surrounding wall are set four gates, one on each side, spacious enough for beasts of burden to enter without difficulty and wide enough for sallies of troops in emergencies. The camp is intersected by streets symmetrically laid out; in the middle are the tents of the officers, and precisely in the centre the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, resembling a small temple.... In case of need, the camp is further surrounded by a ditch four cubits deep and of equal breadth.

This description, written by Josephus in the first century, clearly illustrates how similar the temporary camp of the early imperial period was to its late Republican counterpart as described by Polybius writing in the middle of the second century BC ([Chapter 5](#)). However, there were minor differences, largely caused by organizational changes within the army itself, and the camp that impressed Josephus would have had more in common with the type described in the treatise *De munitionibus castrorum*, attributed (falsely) to Hyginus the *gromaticus* (land surveyor) and dated variously from the first to the third century AD (Frere, 1980). The Hyginian camp ([Fig. 6.1](#)), based more probably on theory than practice, was designed to hold a force of approximately 40,000 men comprised of three legions, praetorians, auxiliary cavalry and infantry, scouts and a camel corps. Unlike the square Polybian camp, that of Hyginus was rectangular in shape with rounded corners, the sides measuring 2,320 by 1,620 Roman feet. It had a rampart of earth, turf or stone some eight Roman feet wide and six feet high and was surrounded by a ditch. Inside, two main streets, running parallel to one another across the shorter axis of the camp, divided it up into three main sections.

The first of these two streets, the *via principalis* extended across the width of the camp with a gate at either end, the *porta principalis sinistra*

and the *porta principalis dextra*. Two other gates set centrally in the shorter sides of the camp were the *porta praetorian*, the main gate at the front of the camp and the *porta decumana* at the rear. The *via principalis*

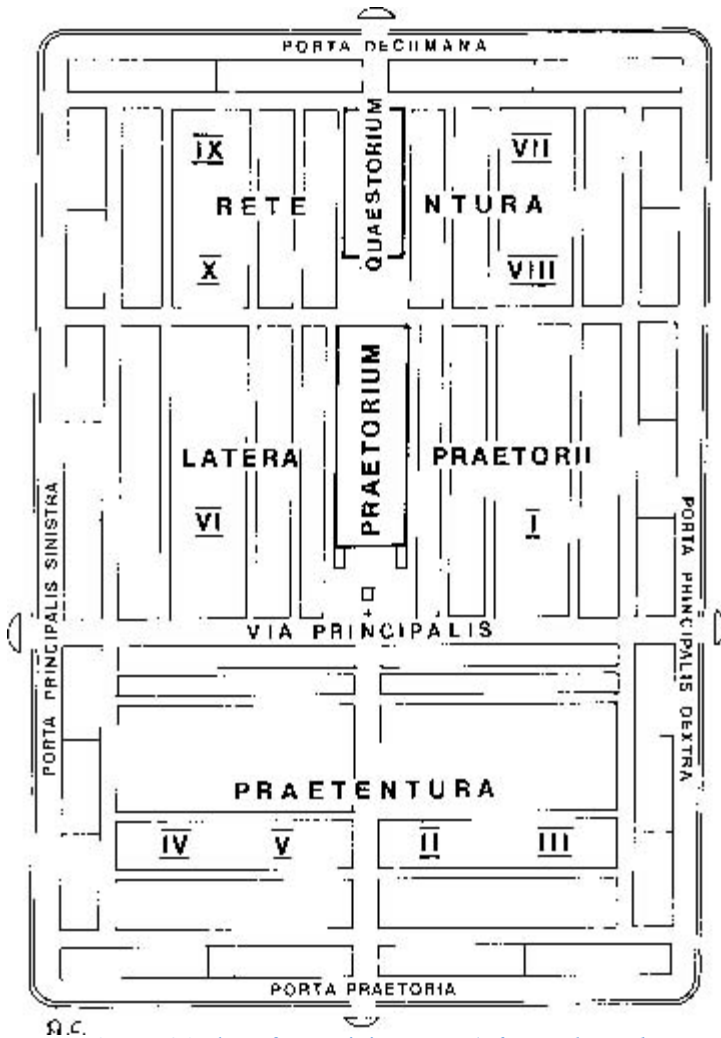


Figure 6.1 Plan of a Hyginian camp (after Richmond)

separated the central section of the camp, the *latera praetorii*, from the front part, the *praetentura*, while the other main street, the *via Quintana*, separated the centre from the rear part of the fort, the *retentura*. A further road, the *via praetorian* ran from the front gate to form a T-junction with the *via principalis* while running round the entire camp inside the rampart

was the *via sagularis*, giving easy access to the defences.

In the very centre of the camp, facing the *porta praetorian*, was the headquarters, the *praetorium* surrounded by the tents of the general's personal staff, praetorian troops and legionaries of the first cohort of one of the legions in garrison. In the *praetentura* were the tents of the legionary legates and tribunes together with a hospital (*valetudinarium*), a *veterinarium* for sick animals, a workshop (*fabrica*) and accommodation for legionaries and auxiliaries. The *retentura* housed the *quaestorium* of the camp prefect where the spoils of war were kept and yet more accommodation for legionary and auxiliary soldiers.

This plan, described by Hyginus as a temporary camp, was the basis for the design and organization of legionary bases when these became permanent. The army of the Republic had fought many of its campaigns in the summer months, utilizing temporary camps (*castra aestiva*), with the troops returning to their homes at the end of each season. But as these wars increasingly involved overseas conquests it became necessary for the troops to stay on to consolidate their gains. Therefore the temporary summer camps had to be supplemented by winter quarters (*hiberna*), built in territory securely under Roman control. These *hiberna* provided more substantial accommodation, especially with regard to store buildings, but still lacked the permanency associated with the fortresses of the imperial period. The change to the latter came about under Augustus, largely as a result of campaigns against the Germans across the Rhine. Between 12 BC and AD 16 the Roman army fought a series of campaigns in Germany under first Drusus then Tiberius and finally Germanicus. The size of the field of operations and the cold mid-European winters resulted in the construction of a series of substantial semipermanent supply depots and winter bases. This trend was further strengthened in AD 9 when the general Varus was defeated in the Teutoburg forest with the loss of three legions. So profound was the shock caused by this event that Augustus advised his successor Tiberius not to extend the limits of the empire any further and so by the end of his reign the Rhine and Danube had effectively become the northern frontiers of the Roman world. As a result permanent legionary bases and auxiliary forts were established along the Rhine. By the middle of the century the distinction between the permanent base and the *hiberna* was clearly established.

Some of these early legionary bases housed two legions, as at Xanten (Vetere) in lower Germany, but usually only one. The fortresses, designed to house a single legion of 5–6,000 men were usually rectangular in shape and covered an area of approximately 20 ha (50 acres). Inside the overall

effect was reminiscent of the Hyginian temporary camp, displaying a tripartite plan with the headquarters building (*principia*), now separated from the legate's house (*praetorium*), positioned at the junction of the *via principalis* and the *via praetorian*. Although sites such as Carnuntum in Austria offer an interesting exception to the general rectangular plan, a comparison of the fortress plans of Caerleon and Inchtuthil in Britain, Lambaesis in north Africa, and Neuss (Novaesium) in Lower Germany, illustrates the overall similarity of fortress design.

In frontier provinces each legion and its attendant auxiliary regiments controlled a particular military area. On the Rhine and Danube, legionary fortresses were placed close to the frontier while in Britain the eventual permanent fortresses at Caerleon, Chester and York were at some distance from the northern limits of the empire. But in both instances the legions acted as strategic reserves available as support for the more localized peace-keeping duties of the *auxilia* and capable of undertaking major punitive campaigns into hostile territory when necessary.

Augustus organized his auxiliary forces into three types of unit: the *cohors peditata*, the *cohors equitata* and the *ala*. In this early period all these units were about 500 men strong, the number in each regiment being based on that of a legionary cohort. Later in the first century AD some larger regiments of each type were created ; normally 1,000 strong, these units were designated *milliaria* to differentiate them from the smaller units, henceforth called *quingenaria*. This change probably occurred in the reign of Vespasian, a view supported by the earliest epigraphic record of a milliary regiment although Josephus records the presence of such units among Vespasian's infantry in the Jewish War as early as AD 67.

The *auxilia* supplemented the legions, providing light infantry, cavalry and specialist units such archers. Much of our knowledge concerning the standard size of these regiments comes from Hyginus (*De munitionibus castrorum*), although it appears that minor variations in unit strength could occur and that numbers were not always kept up. Basically quingenary infantry units, each commanded by a *praefectus cohortis* consisted of six centuries of eighty men with an internal hierarchy similar to that in a legion. Milliary units had ten centuries. The *cohors equitata* was a unit composed of both horsemen and infantry supposedly with 380 infantry and 120 *equites* in the smaller sized unit and 760 infantry and 240 mounted men in the larger. The *ala* was a cavalry regiment and the most important of the different types of auxiliary unit; a quingenary *ala* was made up of sixteen troops (*turmae*) each thirty-two men strong and under a troop commander (*decurio*). A *praefectus alae* was the commanding officer of

the regiment. The *ala milliaria*, having twenty-four *turmae*, perhaps of larger size, was much less common with no more than ten such regiments stationed throughout the empire by the second century.

In the early part of the first century some of these auxiliary cavalry regiments were officered by local chieftains from the areas where the units were raised but this was a temporary stage and soon all auxiliary units were under the command of officers from either Italy itself or the more romanized parts of southern Gaul and Spain. They were of equestrian rank and, like their senatorial counterparts, were usually following a well-defined career structure, in this case known as the *tres militiae*, holding a succession of three main posts: *praefectus cohortis*, *tribunus militum* in a legion and finally *praefectus equitum* in charge of an *ala*. With the right patronage and a record of capable service these men might continue up the promotional ladder to become an imperial procurator, the equestrian governor of Egypt, or a praetorian prefect in charge of the emperor's bodyguard.

Conversely, the rank and file in the *auxilia* were not usually Italians and only rarely were they Roman citizens. Membership of the *auxilia* was open to any freeborn man within the Empire, providing he satisfied army requirements. The pay and conditions of service were somewhat less attractive than in the legions or the Praetorian Guard and so Roman citizens usually chose to serve in the two latter. However, even the *auxilia* provided regular pay and certain other benefits not available in civilian life and although conscription was often used, there must usually have been a steady stream of non-citizen recruits into the *cohorts* and *alae*.

In the Julio-Claudian period many of these units were raised in Gaul, Spain and Thrace. They bear a variety of titles which are usually of tribal or national origin, but may occasionally include the name of an early commander, or be of an entirely honorific nature. For example, the *ala Gallorum Indiana*, a unit raised in Gallia Lugdunensis, was named after Julius Indus who was instrumental in putting down the revolt of Julius Sacrovir in AD 21. An interesting episode concerning auxiliary recruitment in Thrace in AD 26 is recalled by Tacitus. Thrace was not finally annexed by Rome until AD 46 but had the status of a client kingdom before this and Thracian regiments seem to have served in the Roman army as early as the reign of Augustus. Tacitus records the award of an honorary triumph to Gaius Poppaeus Sabinus for suppressing Thracian mountain tribesmen who had rebelled he tells us because of 'their uncivilized and intractable temperaments, and their refusal of the conscription system which drafted their best men into our forces'.

Apparently previous levies had only served in a fairly local capacity and then under their own chieftains but now they had heard that the conscripts were to be transported to other provinces. The rebels were convincingly beaten and immediately after the revolt two *alae* and seven cohorts of Thracians were dispatched to the Rhine.

This account is informative as to the character of many auxiliary regiments and Roman policy towards them. While many units were immediately 'regularized' under an equestrian commander, as late as the 60s the Rhineland Batavi were supplying troops, in lieu of tribute, to serve in units commanded by their own nobles. As with some of the early Thracian units, many of these men were stationed close to home in the lower Rhineland, but, after their involvement in the revolt of Julius Civilis, in AD 69–70, the arrangement was altered and the Batavi were organized into more standardized units, under equestrian officers, and posted to the Danube.

Both examples illustrate the gradual development in Roman thinking away from the use of 'allied forces' and towards Roman 'auxiliary regiments'. At the time of inception each unit had its own unique ethnic character, but as units were transferred from one end of the empire to the other local recruitment from the area where the unit was stationed gradually replaced that from the home area. An early example of this situation is Sextus Valerius Genialis who served and died at Cirencester (Glos.) in the pre-Flavian period. He was a trooper in a Thracian *ala* but was himself a Frisian tribesman, recruited when the unit was stationed in the Rhineland. From the time of Hadrian most recruits will have been obtained locally, and only specialist units, such as regiments of Syrian archers, seem to have made any attempt to maintain contact with the home region. Eventually, each unit, whatever its origin, will have possessed the same organization and used the same standard uniform and equipment, even though local differences in conditions will always have produced slight variations in character.

Compared with service in the legions, auxiliaries in the Augustan period received few benefits other than regular meals, pay and medical care. Augustus seems to have set no fixed term of years for service in the *auxilia*, in contrast to the legions and Praetorian Guard. Indeed, during the reign of Tiberius it was common for men to have served between thirty and forty years. One man, Tiberius Julius Rufus, serving with the *ala Scubulorum*, had been in the army for fifty years when he was discharged, probably early in the reign of Claudius.

Disturbances such as those caused by the Numidian chieftain Tacfarinas,

who, Tacitus tells us, had deserted from service as a Roman auxiliary, and in Thrace, both in the reign of Tiberius, suggests that some kind of reward for service in the *auxilia* was necessary. Perhaps in response to this need, from the reign of Tiberius can be found the first large scale awards of Roman citizenship to long serving auxiliaries. Whether or not this type of award followed an Augustan precedent is difficult to ascertain due to the shortage of epigraphic evidence for the period and the move may have been prompted solely by such episodes as those above.

The much prized award of citizenship was ultimately given to most auxiliaries who had served loyally for twenty-five years or more. Even then, not all auxiliaries received the citizenship and of those who did, many had to serve well over the twenty-five year period, until Claudius regulated the length of service at thirty years and in addition fixed the number of years service needed to qualify for the award of citizenship at twenty-five. Henceforth, at the end of his term of service an auxiliary who was given an honourable discharge (*honesta missio*) received a diploma, comprising two inscribed bronze plates, which recorded his grant of citizenship and also *conubium*, the right of marriage and the legitimization of any children. The award was given to serving soldiers after twenty-five years, until the overall length of service was reduced to this term in the Flavian period, when citizenship and discharge became simultaneous. The lure of citizenship after a fixed number of years must have proved an irresistible incentive to many a potential peregrine recruit and the children of these auxiliaries, being citizens, provided the empire with further recruits for the legions.

The main purpose of the *auxilia* in battle was to provide the flexibility of action and mobility that was impossible for the heavily armed legionary infantry. Trajan's Column illustrates the dress and equipment of auxiliaries of the early second century. Many appear to wear a mail cuirass, leather trousers and a helmet. The infantry carry swords and oval shields. For the cavalry, a better idea of their appearance can be gained from the study of the series of fine first-century tombstones with sculpted rider reliefs which occur in Britain and the Rhineland (Anderson, 1984). On the tombstones of Vonatorix, a trooper of the *ala Longiniana*, at Bonn, and of Longinus, a *duplicarius* of the *ala prima Thracum*, at Colchester, both men are shown wearing scale armour cuirasses (*lorica squamata*), that of Longinus stretching down as far as his thighs. On many of these stones the troopers are shown wielding a cavalry lance and wear a long sword (*spatha*) on the right side. On the left side they carry an oval or hexagonal shield. Their equipment is usually completed by a helmet somewhat more extravagant in

its design than those worn by legionaries, although those depicted may have been for use only on ceremonial parades.

There were considerable differences in the appearance of soldiers from one regiment to the next, either because of the ethnic character of some units or local climatic conditions, or because of the differing status and pay levels of the three main types of regiment. Such differences as existed between men in an *ala*, a *cohors equitata* and a *cohors peditata* is revealed quite graphically in an address by the Emperor Hadrian to the army of Numidia on the occasion of his visit to Lambaesis in AD 128. In his speech to the horsemen of *cohors VI Commagenorum equitata* he says:

‘It is difficult for the cavalry of the cohorts to make a good impression even by themselves, and still harder for them not to give dissatisfaction after the exercise of the auxiliary cavalry. They have larger ground coverage, a larger number of men throwing javelins; their right wheeling is in close array, their Cantabrian manoeuvre closely knit ; the beauty of their horses and the elegance of their equipment is in keeping with their level of pay. Nevertheless, and despite the heat, you avoided being tedious by doing promptly what had to be done. In addition you hurled stones from slings and fought with missiles. Your mounting was everywhere brisk.’

The possibility of a display by a *cohors equitata* being ‘tedious’ to Hadrian when compared to the superior abilities of the *ala* can leave no doubt as to the relative status to each other of these two types of regiment. Although evidence for auxiliary pay scales is notoriously sparse, Watson has conjectured that during the period from Domitian to Septimius Severus a trooper in an *ala* was paid 200 *denarii* per annum, his mounted counterpart in a *cohors equitata* was paid 150 *denarii*, while *pedites* received 100 *denarii*.

In battle and on the march the auxiliaries supported the legions. An example of this concord is illustrated by Josephus when he describes the progress of Vespasian and his army from Ptolemais to Galilee:

The auxiliary light-armed troops and archers were sent in advance, to repel any sudden incursions of the enemy and to explore suspected woodland suited for the concealment of ambushes. Next came a contingent of heavy-armed Roman soldiers, infantry and cavalry. They were followed by a detachment composed of ten men from each century, carrying their own equipment and the instruments for marking out the

camp; after these came the road makers to straighten the curves on the road. Behind these Vespasian posted his personal baggage and that of his legates, with a strong escort of cavalry to protect them. He himself rode behind with the pick of the infantry and cavalry and his guard of lancers. Then came the cavalry units of the legions ;... These were followed by the mules carrying the siege towers and the other machines. Then came the legates, the prefects of the cohorts, and the tribunes, with an escort of picked troops. Next the standards surrounding the eagle ... followed by the trumpeters, and behind them came the solid column, marching six abreast. Behind the infantry the servants attached to each legion followed in a body, conducting the mules and other beasts of burden which carried the soldiers' baggage. At the end of the column came the crowd of mercenaries, and last of all for security a rearguard composed of light and heavy infantry and a considerable body of cavalry.

Although the *auxilia* supported the legions in battle, guarding their flanks, providing cavalry charges and pursuing the beaten enemy in their flight, they were quite capable of fighting sizeable actions without legionary assistance. The battle of Mons Graupius in AD 84, the climax of Julius Agricola's campaigns in Scotland, was fought entirely by auxiliaries, with the legions lined up in front of the rampart of the Roman camp as little more than spectators.

Auxiliary regiments that displayed particular bravery in action were rewarded with certain honours. As part of a general reorganization of the army following the civil war of 68–69, Vespasian appears to have instituted the practice of awarding block grants of citizenship to auxiliary regiments who showed outstanding valour in battle. Only men who were serving in the regiment at the time of the award received citizenship by this method; subsequent recruits still had to serve for twenty-five years to qualify as before, but henceforth the unit retained the grant as a battle honour in its official title by using the suffix *c.R.* (*civium Romanorum*). Such awards continued into the second century. With this and other awards for bravery auxiliary units could accumulate an impressive series of titles, such as exemplified by the *ala Augusta Gallorum Petriana Milliaria c.R. bis torquata* which in addition to a grant of citizenship had also been awarded ceremonial torques on two occasions.

In peacetime the roles of the legions and the *auxilia* were somewhat different. Whereas the overall jurisdiction of a legion covered an extensive area, that of the auxiliary regiment was much more localized. The main roles of the *auxilia* involved patrolling and policing the communications

routes, roads and river crossings and controlling any civil unrest which could threaten internal security.

Newly conquered territories were covered with a network of auxiliary forts situated usually along principal communication routes and often watching over centres of the indigenous population. These forts, usually built originally of turf and timber and later of stone, each housed a single regiment, although some exceptions are known. The internal area of these forts varied in size according to the garrison. A *cohors quingenaria peditata* usually required about one hectare (2.5 acres) while five (12 acres) to five and a half (13 acres) sufficed for an *ala milliaria* (Hassall, 1983). By the Flavian period most new forts were built to a standard plan, rectangular and with rounded corners, resembling a playing card. The plan was essentially a development from the temporary camp as described by Hyginus. The buildings inside conformed to a tripartite arrangement with the central range situated between the *viae principalis* and *quintana*. It contained the *principia* in the centre, flanked on one side by the *praetorium* and the other by granaries (*horrea*) and possibly a workshop (*fabrica*) or hospital (*valetudinarium*). In the *praetentura* and the *retentura* were barracks, stables and store buildings. Despite the overall standardization, no two forts were exactly the same.

The *auxilia* had originally been organized as specialized provincial troops to complement legionary functions, yet by the end of the first century AD the *alae* and *cohortes* had become so integrated into the regular army that some of their flexibility of action was diminished and particular ethnic fighting skills fell victim to standardized training methods and the lack of specialist recruits from each unit's home area. In response, new irregular units of native soldiers were recruited from the frontier zones. These units of infantry (*numeri*) and cavalry (*cunei*) were despatched to other frontier zones to provide support for auxiliary garrisons. In the early second century several *numeri* of Britons were sent to Upper Germany to man signal towers and outpost forts such as that at Hesselbach, a 0.4 ha (1.2 acres) fort containing four barrack blocks and storebuildings. Presumably the garrison here was organized into four centuries but in general little is known of the size and character of *numeri* and there may have been considerable variation in the numbers of men serving in each unit.

Conclusion

Trajan's Dacian wars brought Rome her last great haul of war booty and also marked the last successful campaign of conquest fought by the empire. Subsequent acquisitions were small-scale, short-lived and rarely viable in economic and manpower terms. Trajan's vast new territories in the east, so easily conquered in AD 114 and 115 proved untenable and when the emperor died in August 117, his successor Hadrian immediately abandoned these Parthian territories. The expansionism that characterized Rome's rise to empire was all but finished.

To Hadrian, establishing Rome's frontiers and defending the Empire within was more important than further conquest. Not only were frontiers established but Hadrian also intended that in many areas they should be permanent and marked by substantial linear barriers, the best known of which is Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain ([Part 4](#)).

Units now stationed along these linear barriers became permanent frontier guards. Both the legions and *auxilia* were now so entrenched in their respective fortresses and forts that regiments were only rarely moved, in contrast to the practice in the first century when it was commonplace for whole legions and their auxiliary regiments to be moved from one end of the empire to the other in response to a particular crisis. Now legionary and auxiliary detachments, rather than complete units, were despatched to deal with trouble and these were supposed to return to their parent regiments when the problem had been dealt with.

In practice this brought about a virtual split in the army itself, creating a static frontier garrison on one hand and a succession of ad hoc mobile field armies on the other. As yet, this division was temporary and borne out of circumstance but that the arrangement should become permanent and formalized in the later empire was now inevitable.

• THE • ARMY • OF • THE • LATE • • EMPIRE •

R. S. O. Tomlin

The late-Roman army was shaped, like all the institutions of the Late Empire, by the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine; but they only completed a process that began in the second century, when the unwarlike Marcus Aurelius was forced to take personal command, to improvise field armies and promote able officers unconventionally, and to raise two new legions, because of the crisis on the frontiers. The first soldiers' emperor, Septimius Severus, despite having seen no active service until his proclamation by the Danubian legions, had a clear grasp of military needs and realities. Soldiers' marriages were legally recognized, their pay and privileges were increased, promotion was made easier into posts traditionally held by the upper classes. Severus also increased the legionary army by one-tenth, by raising three *Parthica* legions commanded, not by senatorial legates, but like the Egyptian legion by experienced officers who had already twice been a legion's leading centurion. One of these legions, the Second, was not committed to frontier defence, but was stationed near Rome, where the old Praetorian Guard was replaced by ten new cohorts of double strength recruited from legionaries. These elite forces, equivalent to three legions, with the help of cavalry that included Moors and guardsmen seconded from provincial *alae*, were the ancestors of the fourth-century *comitatenses*: a strategic reserve with which the emperor could reinforce the frontier armies – or curb them if they rebelled.

Despite the five legions added by Marcus and Severus, the Roman army lost the initiative to its new enemies. In Germany the tribes coalesced into two confederacies, the Franks on the Lower Rhine, and the Alamanns beyond the fortifications which linked the middle Rhine and upper Danube. East German peoples like the Goths and Vandals migrated southward, pressing other tribes against the Danube frontier, and threatening Dacia and the Balkans. In the east a new Persian dynasty displaced the Parthians and set about regaining Roman Mesopotamia and Syria. This war on several fronts divided the Empire's resources. In half a century, from 235 to 284, there were almost twenty emperors who could claim to be 'legitimate' by controlling Rome, not to mention all their rivals and colleagues, but somehow the Empire survived. Due credit has not always been given to Gallienus, in whose reign the Persians took Antioch and were only driven out by the initiative of a Roman protectorate, the caravan city of Palmyra, and the western provinces proclaimed their own 'Gallic' emperor. However, despite controlling little more than Italy and Africa, Gallienus, by his ill-documented reforms, forged the weapons with which his 'Illyrian' successors achieved a military renaissance. A medieval source credits him with being the first to form cavalry units, 'the Roman army having been previously largely infantry'. This is an exaggeration as independent cavalry forces had contributed to the victories of Trajan and Severus, but a cavalry army is now heard of under a single commander; and gold coins were struck at Milan to honour, and no doubt repay, 'the loyalty of the Cavalry'. These *equites* included 'Dalmatians' and 'Moors'. It is surely no coincidence that units of 'Illyrian' *equites Dalmatae* and *equites Mauri* are systematically distributed among the fourth-century frontier armies on the Danube and in the East, together with *equites Promoti* and *equites Scutarii*, also described as 'Illyrian'. They must all derive from an 'Illyrian' (i.e. Danubian) cavalry army recruited from Dalmatians, Moors, *promoti* (detached legionary cavalry) and *scutarii* (presumably they used the *scutum* shield). Mounted archers and *equites Stablesiani* (perhaps the mounted legionaries serving as governors' bodyguards) are found similarly distributed. Infantry for a field army was found by Gallienus in the usual way, by withdrawing detachments (*vexillationes*) from frontier legions, of the sort attested in north-west Macedonia (*II Parthica* and the African legion *III Augusta*) and at key points in Pannonia, the British and German legions 'with their *auxilia*' at Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium), and at Ptuj (Poetovio) the pair from Dacia Ripensis. These detachments became virtually independent of their parent units. Base silver coins struck by Gallienus in 259–60 honoured the

Praetorian Guard, the *II Parthica*, and legions on the Rhine and Danube, with the civil-war title *pia fidelis*. These coins, however, are not found on the frontiers, which Gallienus did not then control, but in northern Italy and its north-eastern approaches; they were surely paid to legionary detachments which remained loyal after their parent units proclaimed usurpers.

‘Senatorial’ writers are hostile to Gallienus, because a scapegoat was needed, and probably because from c. 260 he replaced the old legionary legates with professional officers, equestrian prefects like those of the *Parthica* legions with the title of ‘acting legates’. Officers of the field army, Praetorian tribunes and even a centurion in one of the legionary detachments now received a new title, ‘*protector* of the Emperor’. The word *protector* is found earlier (of legionaries serving as bodyguards), but, as a result of Gallienus’ innovation, would later mark an important institution of the Late Empire. However, this mark of distinction for the officer corps did not save Gallienus from a conspiracy among them which involved his successors Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian. They and their fellow-‘Illyrian’ Probus were the leaders of a virtual junta of officers from the Danubian provinces where much of the army was recruited; between them they restored the empire’s unity by defeating the Goths and other invaders, annexing Palmyra, and terminating the ‘Gallic’ empire. Roman prestige in the east was restored by the sack of the Persian capital Ctesiphon. But Aurelian, after defeating a German invasion of Italy, began to build the walls which still surround Rome: an admission that even the heart of the Empire was no longer safe from sudden attack.

Military and political stability was finally restored by Diocletian, an administrative genius who made a system out of half a century’s improvisation. As his colleagues he chose better generals than himself, his fellow- ‘Illyrians’ Maximian, Constantius and Galerius, whose loyalty and determination are embodied in a famous statue-group: the ‘Tetrarchs’ are carved in porphyry, one hand on another’s shoulder, the other hand clutching a sword hilt (pl. 7.1). The restless energy which suppressed revolts and restored the old frontiers is echoed in the record of his travels inscribed by one of their veterans on his wife’s tombstone: Aurelius Gaius, a legionary cavalryman who rose to be an *optio* in the imperial entourage, never visited Rome or Italy, but crossed the Rhine and Danube repeatedly, and served in ‘India’ (upper Egypt) and almost every province from Mesopotamia to Mauretania. He was also a Christian.

A Christian critic accuses Diocletian of ‘quadrupling’ the army – an allusion to his three colleagues; the truth seems to be that most of Severus’

thirty-three legions survived, a total more or less doubled by Diocletian. Most of them were posted in the traditional pairs, but probably under strength, to the provincial armies; they were accompanied by cavalry detachments drawn apparently from the field army of Gallienus and his successors. These cavalry *vexillationes*, as they are confusingly called, even outranked the legions, let alone the surviving *alae* and cohorts, in frontier armies which were increasingly commanded by professional soldiers, *duces*, instead of provincial gov-ernors. This tendency was completed by Constantine, who made almost all posts exclusively military or civilian. However, the nucleus of a mobile army was retained. Diocletian attached two of his new legions, the *loviani* and *Herculiani*, originally Danubian legionaries armed with the characteristic late-Roman weighted dart (*martiobarbulus*), to his entourage, the *sacer comitatus* which ‘accompanied’ him. Soldiers now speak of their service ‘in the *comitatus*’, from which the word *comitatenses* derives. To them should be added other elite legions, like the *Solenses* and *Martenses*, named after the patron gods of Diocletian's two junior colleagues, and the *Lanciarii* (among them Aurelius Gaius), apparently picked Praetorians and legionaries armed with lances. The most senior of the fourth-century cavalry units, the *equites Promoti* and the *equites Comites*, and the first Guards units (*scholae*), seem also to have been organized by Diocletian. Nevertheless, the permanent field forces of the Tetrarchy were small by later standards, and were supplemented as required from the frontier armies. Thus an Egyptian papyrus of 295 records the issue of fodder not only to the *Comites*, but also to as many as ten pairs of legionary detachments, probably including that from Dacia Ripensis. The same two ‘legions’ are later found as the garrison of Diocletian's new Egyptian province of Herculeia, and were presumably detachments posted there by him; the implication is that Diocletian, perhaps unlike Gallienus, did not regard legionary detachments as permanent, and returned them to garrison duties when convenient.

Diocletian also reformed the army's logistics. During the last half-century the currency had collapsed, and with it the old system of taxation; the army had requisitioned what it needed at a ‘fair’ price, or at none at all. Diocletian ingeniously resolved this complex of problems by levying foodstuffs, raw materials, manufactured goods (clothing, for example), in the form of taxes calculated as a percentage of the empire's estimated production. In Egypt a sullen population was urged to obey a system devised for its own benefit, without waiting for compulsion, where, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, the retired officer whose *History* is a major source of information about the fourth-century army, a tax defaulter

was ashamed of himself if he did not have scars to prove it. There are vivid glimpses of the army's provisioning in two surviving fragments from the files of the deputy governor (*strategus*) at Panopolis in Egypt. The first consists of copies of letters sent out by him in September 298, many of them relating to preparations for 'the auspiciously impending visit of Our Lord the Emperor Diocletian', but also others authorizing the issue of military rations. Thus officials are ordered to pay an *ala* two months' rations of barley and wheat; the totals are given, and it is possible to calculate that the unit numbered only 116 men and their horses. The second fragment consists of copies of letters received from the *procurator* of the Lower Thebaid, many of them authorizing cash payments to military units in early 300; thus on 30 January the *procurator* wrote to the *strategus*, who received his letter on 9 February, ordering him to pay the *ala I Hiberorum* 73,500 *denarii* (pay) and 23,600 *denarii* (in lieu of rations) for the last four months of 299. The mills ground slow, but exceeding fine: the *strategus* even acknowledges a requisition for hides to repair a cavalry fort's gates, and informs the bearer that it has been 'nibbled by mice and mutilated'.

The great Diocletian abdicated in 305 and retired to a fortified palace on the Adriatic. He had dominated his colleagues, but his arrangements were upset by an usurper in Britain, Constantius' son Constantine, who in 306 emerged from 'the lands of the setting sun', as he described them later, to become sole emperor in 324 after a series of civil wars. A blitzkrieg in 312 eliminated one of his rivals, Maximian's son Maxentius, who had held Italy even against Galerius. Constantine, who had used only a fraction of his available forces, gave the credit to his new patron, the God of the Christians. More prosaically, he monopolized a new infantry unit, the *auxilium*, which was to provide the shock troops of the late-Roman army. The first *auxilia* were probably raised by his father or Maximian, the *Cornuti* or 'horned men' who seem to be depicted on his Arch at Rome (pl. 7.2), and the 'armlet wearers', the *Bracchiati*. Later we find them and another crack *auxilium* pair, the *Iovii* and *Victores*, raising a Germanic war cry before they charge. There is good reason to suppose that the formidable new *auxilia* were raised and recruited from Rhine-Germans, whether volunteers or prisoners-of-war, or young men from the *laeti* settlements of submissive Germans established by Diocletian and his colleagues on derelict land in Gaul.

Constantine also raised new legions, but a more important source of new 'mobile' units were the existing frontier legions and the garrisons of other strategic points. Legionary detachments were withdrawn for good: some of them kept their old name, like the *Quinta Macedonica*, the longest-lived of

all legions (it was still part of Justinian's army in the sixth century); others took numerical names, like *Primant* or *Undecimani* or names from a previous station, like the *Divitenses*, which had been a detachment of *II Italica* stationed at the Cologne bridgehead of Divitia. 'Paired' with them are the *Tungrecani*, which had presumably been the garrison of Tongres (Tungri). The old Praetorian Guard was disbanded, no doubt because it had fought for Maxentius, but also because it was now obsolete: there was a new mobile army. The role of imperial guards was now filled by the *scholae*, crack cavalry units 500-strong (at least in the sixth century), of which there were a dozen by the end of the fourth century. They were followed by cavalry *vexillationes* like the elite *Comites* and *Promoti*, others drawn from the same sources as the new infantry (*equites Cornuti*, etc.), and many with titles also found in the frontier armies (*Dalmatae*, *Scutarii*, etc.) which recall the cavalry army of Gallienus. Some of the latter belong to numbered sequences, like the well-paid trooper of *VI Stablesiani* who disappeared with his silver helmet (pl. 7.3) into a Dutch swamp in c. 320, or carry titles which recall a time in garrison (*equites Dalmatae Passerentiaci*). The likeliest explanation is that these are frontier units taken from Gallienus' cavalry army, which were withdrawn once more by Constantine to swell a mobile army.

The converse of these *comitatenses* were the *limitanei*, so called because they garrisoned forts and fortified towns in the frontier zone (*limes*). They consisted of old-style legions, *alae* and cohorts, and new-style units of *equites* (sometimes reduced to *cunei* on the Danube) and infantry mostly called *auxiliares* or *milites*. The evidence is still being accumulated, but they seem to have been much smaller, as well as differently equipped, than their counterparts in the early Empire. They were grouped administratively into armies covering one or more provinces, commanded by a *dux*, except in most of Africa, where the frontier sectors, chiefly mountain massifs or semi-desert tracts, were allotted to *praepositi* supervised by a *comes* with a powerful mobile army (Part 4, Chapter 10). The fourth-century 'order of battle' on the frontiers can be recovered from the enigmatic *Notitia Dignitatum*, an illustrated handbook of high offices dating from c. 395, which survives in several later copies (pls 7.4 and 7.5); unfortunately its interpretation presents many problems; thus the garrison of Hadrian's Wall seems to have survived almost intact from the early third century, whereas that of the Mainz sector cannot be earlier than c. 368. The *Notitia*'s purpose is also disputed, but an attractive idea is that it was compiled in its present form for the convenience of the staff of the western commander-in-chief (*magister peditum praesentalis*) which levied fees for issuing officers with

their commissions. Among the entries is *ala V Praelectorum, Dionysiada*, the command of a cavalry unit at Dionysias in the Egyptian Fayûm. This was a typically massive Diocletianic fort with projecting towers and walls four metres thick: since any external threat was remote, its strength suggests a defensive mentality and a ruthless application of general principles. The commandant in the 340s, Flavius Abinnaeus, is better known to us than to most of his contemporaries, since by happy chance his papers have survived. The first is a draft petition to the eastern emperor, Constantine's son Constantius II, in which he complains that when he presented his 'sacred letter' of appointment, he was told that similar letters had already been presented by other men. Theirs had been obtained illicitly, whereas Abinnaeus had been appointed after an audience with the emperor; fortunately he was confirmed in his appointment (c. 342). The letters he received contain vivid glimpses of the 'police' duties of *limitanei*. 'Your valiance, my lord *praepositus*, is wont to restrain the robberies and usurpations committed in the localities by the more influential men', writes one petitioner. (Abinnaeus, a soldier of some 40 years' experience, who also owned house rents in Alexandria and farm stock of his own, is clearly one of the ubiquitous 'patrons' of late-Roman society.) He receives appeals from the victims of burglaries, from people who have had sheep or pigs stolen. One of his own men is alleged to have been drunken and violent; another to have led a gang which stole the wool off eleven sheep's backs and drove off six pigs. A clergyman intercedes for a soldier who has deserted; Abinnaeus should exercise his Christian duty of forgiveness. Another clergyman asks for a loan of the nets kept at headquarters, to catch gazelles which have been eating the crops. Official letters require Abinnaeus to provide escorts for tax collectors, to look after two craftsmen cutting timber for a cavalry *vexillatio*, to help control the illicit trade in soda. These intriguing documents illustrate the integration of a garrison with the local community, not the old-fashioned idea that *limitanei* were only hereditary peasant militias. This is amply refuted by Ammianus' eye-witness account of the siege of Amida (359): the frontier-legions trapped by the Persians in a fortified town on the Tigris fought with skill and tenacity. Four years later, *limitanei* from the neighbouring province of Osrhoene shared in the Emperor Julian's invasion of Persia, and shortly afterwards units like the *I* and *II Armeniaca* legions, made redundant by surrender of territory beyond the Tigris, were incorporated in the mobile army of the east under the cumbersome title of *legions pseudocomitatenses*.

The essential difference between *limitanei* and *comitatenses* was that the latter, though they might have families, did not have fixed stations. If they

were not on active service, they were billeted in towns, where they were entitled to one-third of available accommodation, an arrangement that caused friction with their civilian 'hosts'. We hear, however, of one saving his guest's life in a mutiny, and of another who was bequeathed his guest's property. *Comitatenses*, as their name implied, were ideally at the emperor's immediate disposal. A commentary on the 119th Psalm takes the route march as a metaphor of the text, 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it to the end.' The men marched to a prescribed itinerary, with food and lodging arranged in advance, and regular rest-days, 'until they reach the imperial capital of the moment, where the weary armies find rest'. Constantine reorganized the high command by transferring the Praetorian Prefect's military authority to a Master of Cavalry (*magister equitum*) and a Master of Infantry (*magister peditum*) attached to his court, the Prefect remaining responsible for provision and supply. In practice the command of *comitatenses* could not be so centralized. We soon find regional mobile armies, the most important being those of Gaul, the Danubian provinces, and the east, based on Antioch, each of them commanded by its own Master of Cavalry. Smaller mobile forces were detached as required, usually under the command of a count (*comes*), like the four units sent to Britain in 367 when the frontiers collapsed. Africa seems always to have had its own mobile army, strong in cavalry as one would expect, and by the time of the *Notitia* there were others in Britain, Spain and Thrace. Theodosius I grouped the eastern forces into five armies, two of them at his immediate disposal, and all of them commanded by a Master of Soldiers (*magister militum*). He thus avoided what happened in the west from the 380s, where a single commander-in-chief, notably Stilicho during 395–408, dominated the government.

By using the *Notitia* lists, many of whose units can be roughly dated, and a variety of other sources, we can make some rough guesses about the strength of the late-Roman army. Valentinian I at his accession may have divided about 150 mobile units with his brother Valens, if we ignore the African army. By the end of the century, this total seems to have doubled; about one-third were cavalry. Unfortunately these are paper figures. The Spanish army, for example, numbers sixteen units, all infantry, strangely enough; yet we hear nothing of it when there was fighting there in 407 and later. Worse still, we know very little about unit strengths. The Diocletianic *ala* of 116 men has already been mentioned; the same source suggests that there were 77 troopers in a legion's *equites promote*, 121 in a unit of *equites sagittarii*, 164 men in the *cohors XI Chamavorum*, and about 1,000

in each of two legions. In 359 two Danubian cavalry units on service in Mesopotamia totalled 700 men; but in Libya in the early fifth century a cavalry unit of 'Unnigardae' numbered only 40. Ammianus twice mentions detachments of 300 men from unspecified mobile units, once 500 from 'legions'. The emperor Honorius is said to have withdrawn five units from Dalmatia which totalled 6,000 men; six infantry units, however, sent to his aid from the east, totalled only 4,000. The impression one gains from these and other scraps of evidence is that mobile infantry units may have been between 500 and 1,000 men strong, and cavalry units well below 500. Careful study of their forts may tell us something of the strength of frontier units. The legions at least were only shadows; *III Italica*, for example, garrisoned four forts and its old fortress, as well as providing a 'legion' for the nearest mobile army. This impression of small-sized units is reinforced by Julian's self-congratulation at taking 1,000 German prisoners 'in two battles and a siege'; in the siege, which lasted two months, 600 Franks were starved out of their refuge in two derelict forts, and sent to Constantius II for service in the eastern army. Julian's army in 357 numbered only 13,000 men; in 363, with the whole Empire to draw upon, and no other commitments, his two armies for the invasion of Persia totalled only 65,000 men. These are figures for first-rate troops, of course, and represent a fraction only of the paper strength; we get some idea of this from two sixth-century figures, one for Diocletian's army at an unspecified date of 389,704, and an estimate for 'the old empire' of 645,000.

Paper strengths were just that, and no more, when it came to fighting; but multiplied by pay and rations, they represent the cost of the army to the civil population. Late-Roman soldiers did not have to pay for their arms and equipment and uniforms, which were mostly manufactured in state factories. They were also issued with rations which increased as they rose in rank: it was suggested to Valentinian and Valens that it might be worth retiring men who had achieved quintuple rations, to save expense and encourage recruitment. This payment in kind was supplemented by the regular salary (*stipendium*) paid in the bronze small change minted in vast quantities during the fourth century, and by donatives paid by the emperor on accession and at five-year intervals. The accession donative became standardized in 360 as a pound of silver and five gold pieces (*solidi*) (pl. 7.6), and five *solidi* thereafter. Imperial gifts to officers were also manufactured: inscribed silver plate (pl. 7.7), gold and silver 'medallions', gold and silver belt-fittings and brooches as marks of rank.

These terms were generous in an Empire where most of the population lived at subsistence level, yet there was some difficulty in finding enough

recruits. Diocletian enforced the tradition that sons followed their fathers into the army, and in addition levied recruits from landowners as a kind of tax. Valentinian reduced the height qualification from 5 ft 10 in (Roman) to 5 ft 7 in; he found some men liable to military service were mutilating themselves, while others were harboured by his own soldiers under the guise of 'relatives' or 'servants'. Among Abinnaeus' correspondence is a clergyman's plea for his brother-in-law, the son of a deceased soldier and the sole support of his widowed mother, who has been conscripted: release him, or at least 'safeguard him from going abroad with the draft for the *comitatus*, and may God reward you for your charity'. It was the charity of Christians that made a convert of the future monk Pachomius, when he was a young conscript on his way to the *comitatus* in 324: he and his fellows were locked up every night for fear they deserted. Not surprisingly, therefore, the army also recruited non-Romans, mostly Germans. Some were prisoners-of-war like Julian's 600 Franks, but many were volunteers attracted by a much higher standard of living. They might even rise to high rank: one of Valens' generals was an Alamann king who had been kidnapped at a dinner party by order of Julian; the great Stilicho himself was the son of a Vandal cavalry officer. Frankish-born officers at the court of Constantius II in 355 protested that they were 'men devoted to the Empire', and it is noteworthy that we almost never hear of treachery by German-born soldiers. They seem to have been assimilated with fair success, something that changed after the defeat of Adrianople (378), when a desperate shortage of fighting men forced the Roman government to enlist barbarian contingents (*federati*) under their own chieftains. These did not have the same feeling of 'belonging', and after 395 became increasingly aware of their political and military power, which they used to extort subsidies and land from their reluctant hosts.

A recruit rose slowly, by seniority within his unit. A Christian writer uses the noncommissioned ranks as a metaphor of the gulf between a demon and an angel: recruit, trooper (*eques*), *circitor*, *biarchus*, *centenarius*, *ducenarius*, *senator*, *primicerius*, commanding officer (*tribunes*). A late-Roman cemetery at Concordia in north-east Italy contained the expensive stone coffins of about thirty non-commissioned officers and privates from the mobile army: they include a *biarchus* of twenty years' service, a *centenarius* (twenty-two), two *ducenarii* (twenty and twenty-three), two *senatores* aged forty and sixty, and the drill-master (*campidoctor*) of the *Batavi seniores* who died after thirty-five years' service at the age of sixty. Abinnaeus was a *ducenarius* of thirty-three years' service in a cavalry *vexillatio* before a special mission took him to

court, where he 'adored the Sacred Purple'. By kissing the hem of Constantius' garment, he automatically became a *protector domesticus*: the *protectores* from the reign of Diocletian were a kind of staff college in which senior NCOs prepared for regimental commands. After three years Abinnaeus became the prefect of an *ala*, when he found his competitors had used influence to take a shortcut. Thus the senior member (*primicerius*) of the *protectores* in 363 was the future emperor Jovian, at the age of thirty-two – it can be no coincidence that his father was a senior general, the *comes domesticorum*. Ammianus himself, who was a *protector* in his early twenties, must also have had connections. By contrast, Flavius Memorius, the *comes* of the Tangiers army, had served twenty-eight years in the *Ioviani* before he became a *protector*. The future emperor Valentinian, however, was already commanding a mobile *vexillatio* at the age of thirty-six, and the future emperor Theodosius was a *dux* at the age of about twenty-eight. Both were the sons of generals: Valentinian's father Gratianus, like Memorius, is one of the few private soldiers to achieve the rank of *comes*.

Gratianus also achieved a country estate, but most recruits, if they survived twenty to twenty-five years' service, received much less than a legionary of the early Empire. Veterans were encouraged to cultivate derelict land, for which they received a small grant. They also received some tax concessions, including a limited exemption from the five-yearly tax on commerce which was used to pay the donatives of their old comrades-in-arms. Some veterans were men of substance: one, described as a 'landowner', asks Abinnaeus to arrest some local officials, so as to make them produce persons guilty of house-breaking; a veteran's daughter, another 'landowner', requests action against a debtor who has beaten her up with the help of the village policeman when she demanded the money he owed her; a veteran promises to reimburse Abinnaeus for any money he may have to spend at court to secure the promotion of his son within the local *ala*.

Constantine, in a speech to a restive gathering of his 'fellow veterans', promised them undisturbed leisure after their labours. Intelligent emperors advertised their closeness to their men. Julian, the 'sport' of the Constantinian dynasty, who repudiated his uncle's religious faith, none the less swallowed porridge 'even a common soldier would have despised'. Stories were told of both Constantius II and Theodosius begging a crust of bread in a moment of crisis. The dour Valentinian, leading a flying column somewhere near modern Frankfurt, slept in the open under a blanket. His son Gratian, however, lost touch with his army by a passion for hunting and

favouritism for a particular unit; his men abandoned him for Magnus Maximus, the general in Britain, whose first coins, struck in London to pay his first supporters, pointedly imitated the coin portrait of Valentinian. The survival of the sons of Theodosius, therefore, Arcadius and Honorius, is all the more surprising, since they reigned as figureheads without military ability or interest; a critic compares Arcadius in the eunuch-haunted depths of his palace with a deep-sea mollusc. The army was the ultimate, though not the only, source of political power and public security. This was symbolized in the accession ceremonies. Valentinian, for example, after being chosen in conclave by the generals and ministers of state, was presented to the army: he was clothed in purple, crowned, and acclaimed as *Augustus*; lifted on a shield, he was about to speak when the army interrupted him with a demand for a joint-emperor; Valentinian reprimanded them, delivered his prepared speech, and left for his palace ‘hedged in by eagles and standards, already an object of fear’. Ammianus gives a splendid picture of Constantius II, a conscientious but ungifted general with the reputation of winning civil wars and losing foreign ones, making his state entry into Rome. He rode by himself in a golden carriage glittering with jewels, with purple silk snake standards (pl. 7.8) hissing in the breeze overhead. Armoured infantry and *clibanarii*, cavalry that looked like moving statues, marched either side. Amidst a storm of applause Constantius gazed stonily in front of him, moving his head only to bow as the carriage passed under an arch. The emperor in his full robes or battledress, flanked by his guards, was a favourite motif in late-Roman art, found on silver dishes, reliefs and mosaics, and in illuminated books. More than eighty years before Constantius' entry into Rome (357), Aurelian overawed a German delegation by receiving it on a platform with his army drawn up in a crescent on either side; his generals rode their horses, and behind them were the imperial standards, ‘golden eagles, pictures of the emperor, the names of regiments picked out in gilt letters, all of them on silver-plated lances’.

The fourth-century army on campaign tried to live up to the standards of the early empire. Ammianus makes rhetorical complaints about its indiscipline – Valentinian's flying column gave itself away by looting and raising fires – but on the whole this is belied by his narrative. The *comitatenses*, given good leadership, would fight tenaciously and usually with success against odds. What we hear of the maintenance of discipline may not be typical. The antiquarian-minded Julian distributed wreaths after a victory at the gates of Ctesiphon; he also ‘decimated’ a cavalry unit, a punishment he may have misunderstood, since he selected ten victims, not

a tenth. Valentinian revived another ancient punishment, according to an unreliable source, by making the *Batavi* encamp outside the fortifications. His general Theodosius, father of the emperor, treated disloyal African units very harshly; cavalry officers had their hands lopped off, the survivors of a legion were clubbed to death 'in the ancient fashion', deserters were burnt alive or lost their hands. Ammianus, who normally condemns cruelty when he finds it, seems embarrassed at having to defend this 'salutary vigour', and quotes a criticism of these 'savage innovations'. Late-Roman legislation, it is true, is full of such threats, but trained *comitatenses* were too valuable to be treated with indiscriminate brutality. Reading Ammianus, one is struck by their esprit de corps and the survival of old skills. They still entrenched themselves in marching camps with palisades and built permanent forts in stone. They were expected to carry twenty days' rations. They bridged the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates by pontoon bridges, and handled small boats skilfully enough to make night-landings in Alamannia or to hunt down Sarmatians in the Danube marshes. Julian mustered 500 men 'who from early childhood were taught in their native lands to cross the greatest of all rivers', like the Batavians of the early Empire; after they had secured a bridgehead across the Tigris, the rest of the army followed on rafts, or by using the local method of inflated animal skins.

The *comitatenses* were thus at least comparable with the auxiliaries of the early empire, the soldiers who defeated the Caledonians at Mons Graupius. In 357 Julian, with an army of only 13,000, confronted an Alamann host of 35,000 near Strasbourg, but his men and their generals were confident of winning. The Roman cavalry was massed on the right wing, opposed by Alamann cavalry stiffened by light infantry, a tactic which Caesar had learnt from their ancestors the Suebi. When the armies met, a tribune of armoured cavalry (*catafracti*) was wounded, and the Roman cavalry fell back upon the infantry in disorder. (After the battle Julian is said to have humiliated the unit concerned by parading it in female clothing.) The Alamann infantry now made a series of charges, culminating in one by 'a fiery band of tribal nobility including kings', which cut its way to the *Primani*; but this legion stood its ground like the infantry 'wall' recommended by the military theorist Vegetius, and the Alamanns faltered and gave way, suffering heavy loss in their retreat to the Rhine. There was something ominous about this Roman victory – the poor showing of the cavalry. This is a striking feature of Julian's Persian campaign, even though the *Notitia* and other sources make it clear that cavalry was regarded as the senior service. In the advance to Ctesiphon, Julian twice punished cavalry

units which had broken when caught by surprise, the first by ‘decimation’, the second by reducing them to infantry, ‘which is more laborious and lower in rank’. Shortly afterwards the infantry actually complained of the *Tertiaci*, which had given way as the infantry was penetrating the Persian line: they were made to march with the camp followers, and four other cavalry tribunes were cashiered.

The battle of Adrianople (9 August 378), the Black Day of the late-Roman army, has been seen as a victory of cavalry over infantry and a revolution in warfare. Limited offensives had failed to contain the Goths who had overrun the Balkans, so the Eastern Emperor Valens decided to mobilize his full force and to assume active command. Unfortunately he decided to fight before his nephew Gratian arrived with the western army, perhaps because he was jealous of him, or because faulty intelligence had underestimated Gothic numbers. As at Strasbourg, the Roman army made a long march in the heat of the day and arrived, hungry and thirsty, within sight of the Gothic wagon circle. There was a delay while the Goths renewed negotiations, if only to gain time for the return of their cavalry which was out foraging. Meanwhile the Roman army advanced in column, its right wing almost engaged, the left wing still coming up as fast as it could. A truce was being negotiated, when some Roman cavalry, presumably on the right wing, made an insubordinate attack which collapsed. Fighting became general, and at this moment the Gothic cavalry arrived. Ammianus, whose narrative ekes out some vital facts with masses of ‘colour’, unfortunately does not say where its first blow fell, only that the Roman left wing had now reached the wagons, when ‘it was deserted by the rest of the cavalry, overwhelmed by weight of numbers like a collapsing rampart, and thrown back, leaving the infantry exposed’. Thus outflanked, the Roman infantry was enveloped, ‘they looked round and saw no means of escape’, its line was broken in a bloody *mêlée*, and the survivors were pursued until darkness fell. Two-thirds of the army was killed. The losses were equalled only by Cannae (216 BC), Ammianus comments. Here too the Roman cavalry had been driven from the field, and the legions enveloped and crushed. The prime cause of disaster at Adrianople would seem to have been the decision to assault a field fortification, which is what the wagon circle virtually was, while the enemy's powerful cavalry was uncommitted. This ‘decision’ was forced upon Valens by the undisciplined and incompetent cavalry on his right wing. The left wing, advancing hastily, was caught unprepared by a devastating charge on its flank or even from behind, leaving the infantry, already deployed in a crescent round the wagon circle and fighting hand-to-

hand, trapped. We know that there were postmortems after the disaster, and that cowardice or lack of training was held responsible. This would seem to be a fair comment – on the Roman cavalry which lost the battle.

The trained infantry lost at Adrianople could not be replaced. The new emperor Theodosius, whose descendants were figurehead emperors of east and west until the mid-fifth century, was forced to settle the Goths in the Danubian provinces under their own chieftains. When he died in 395, they were soon on the move again – westward, against an empire already weakened by civil wars. For a time Stilicho (pl. 7.9), one of Theodosius' generals and the guardian of his son Honorius the new western emperor, kept them in check, but he was fatally discredited by the collapse of the Rhine frontier at the end of 406, when east German peoples, followed by the Alamanns and Franks, flooded across Gaul and Spain. Surviving garrisons were incorporated in the mobile army, a desperate expedient. The Visigoths invaded Italy; when their demands were ignored by Honorius, they sacked Rome (410). Effective power was in the hands of the western commanders-in-chief, notably Constantius, Aetius and Ricimer, who tried to retain Italy and a few footholds by playing one barbarian people off against another, but the last real hope of recovery disappeared in 429, when the Vandals crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, to pursue an orgy of conquest across the last intact western provinces. In 444 Valentinian III, the grandson of Theodosius, admitted economic and military bankruptcy; the taxpayers were exhausted, and could no longer provide the army with food and clothing:

Unless the soldiers should be supported by trading, which is unworthy and shameful for an armed man, they can scarcely be vindicated from the peril of hunger or from the destruction of cold ... [yet] if we require these expenses from the landowner, in addition to the expenses which he furnishes, such an exaction of taxes would extinguish his last tenuous resources.

When Valentinian was murdered in 455, the Vandals descended on Rome and sacked it again. The eastern Empire survived the fifth-century crisis: it was economically stronger, and its territory except in Europe was almost free of invasion. It even intervened from time to time in the west, but without lasting effect. The western Empire, however, was bleeding to death as it lost the territory which alone could support a regular army, and was forced to rely more and more upon barbarian *federati*. Not long before the now-barbarian army of Italy deposed the last western emperor (476), we

catch a glimpse of the last *limitanei* on the upper Danube. The *cohors IX Batavorum*, the garrison of Passau, sent some men to draw back-pay for the unit. No more was heard of them, until their bodies came floating down the river. When Abinnaeus' old fort was evacuated, the last troops even closed the gate behind them; but the *Batavi* simply melted into the civilian population. 'While the Roman Empire still stood, ' our source comments, 'soldiers were maintained with public pay in many towns for the defence of the frontier, but when that custom lapsed the military units were abolished with the frontier.'

A pagan critic of Constantine accuses him of reversing the strategy of Diocletian, which had made the frontiers impregnable: most of the army was withdrawn from the frontiers and stationed in cities which did not need a garrison, a burden for the cities concerned, and demoralizing for the men themselves. This is a wilful misunderstanding of the strategy of the late-Roman Empire. It was impossible to hold the frontier line against all attack, since external enemies retained the initiative and could always concentrate superior forces locally. Instead, the screen of garrisons in the frontier zone would, at least in theory, check minor incursions, and hinder major invasions by holding fortified towns and supply-bases, and strongpoints of all kinds along the lines of communication. This would protect the civil population (tax-payers, if nothing else), deny food to the enemy, and gain time to concentrate mobile forces for counter-attack. The invaders would either be forced to disperse over the countryside to forage, where they could be hunted down piecemeal by small mobile detachments; or if they massed together, they could be brought to battle, when the Roman mobile army, better armed and disciplined and regularly provisioned, had a good chance of winning against numerical odds. Once defeated in the field, invaders could be pursued into their homeland, and reprisals would follow until they made peace. For the emperor himself, this strategy had an important side-effect: he could retain personal control of the Empire's best troops and insure himself against usurpers. The strategy also had its weaknesses. Much depended, as always in Roman imperial history, on the emperor's ability and the loyalty it commanded. Slowness of communications – no army, however 'mobile', could move faster than its infantry could march – led to the multiplication of mobile armies; this shortened the Empire's reaction time, but divided its strength and increased the risk of an usurpation. Despite the premium on mobility, the Romans still failed, as they had always done, to achieve a decisive superiority over their enemies in cavalry. Inactive troops, whether they were *limitami* or *comitatenses* in reserve, were always liable to deteriorate. For a complex of

reasons, such as the number and variety of its enemies, the aspects of its social system that we loosely call 'corruption', and the economic burden of filling so many 'idle mouths', the late-Roman Empire lacked the reserves to recover, as the Republic had done after Cannae, from a major defeat. But even if we overlook the survival of East Rome, we must credit Diocletian, Constantine and Valentinian with achieving a military equilibrium that might once have seemed beyond hope.



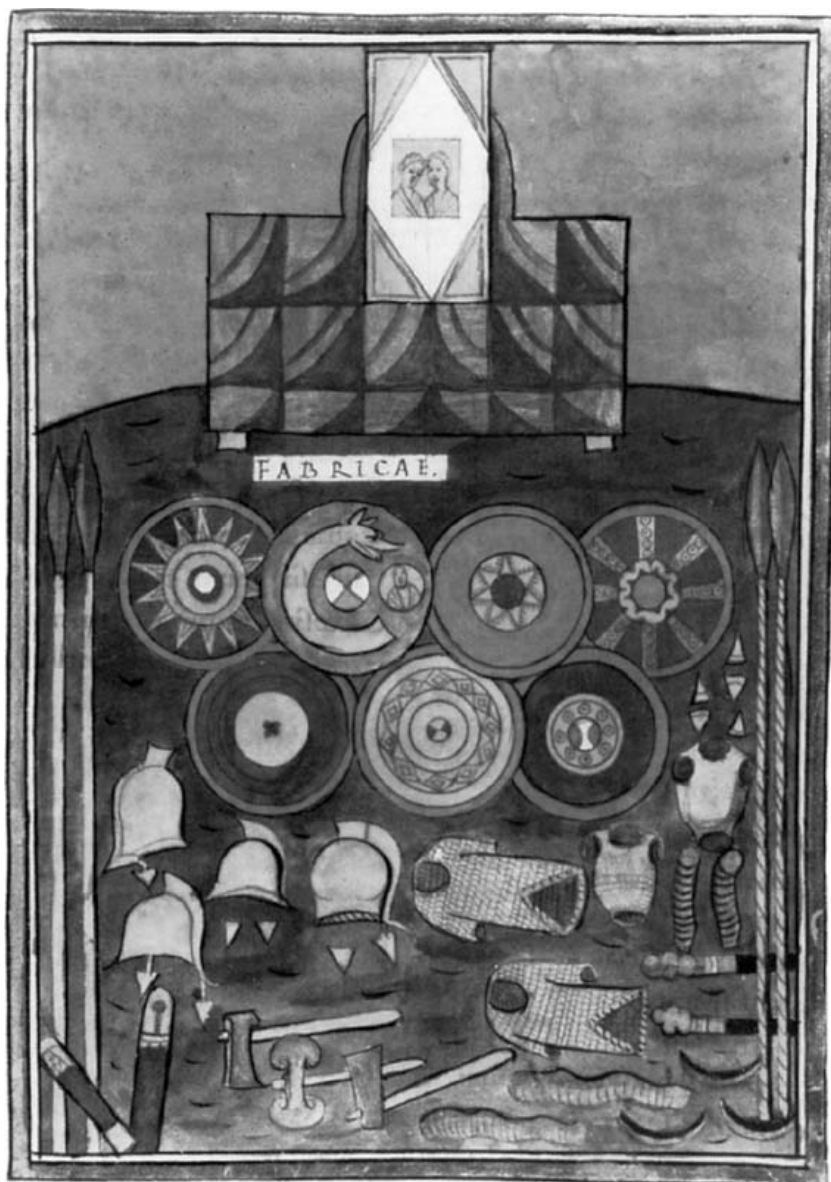
7.1 Diocletian and his colleagues. A porphyry statue group now standing outside St Mark's Cathedral, Venice. They wear generals' cloaks over battle-dress, the 'Pannonian' undress leather cap of the late-Roman army, and are armed with swords carrying imperial eagles' heads on the handles



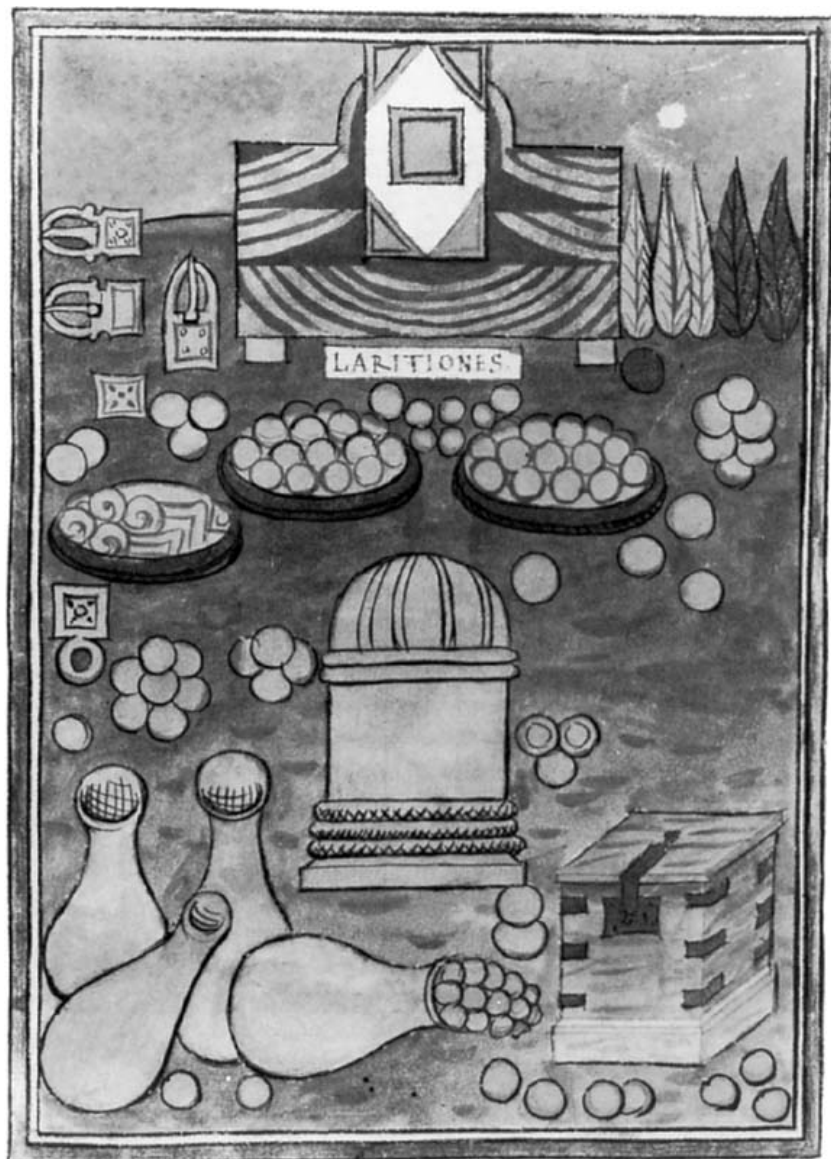
7.2 Arch of Galerius, Thessalonika. Galerius is in general's uniform and addresses armoured cavalymen (*catafracti*) wearing scale armour and conical helmets; a lion (now lost) and an eagle appear on two shields; flags (*vexilla*) and snake (*draco*) battle-standards fly overhead



7.3 Cavalry helmet, c. 320, of iron and silver-gilt, belonging to a trooper of the *equites VI Stablesiani*. Found near Deurne, Holland, together with other clothing and equipment and 37 Constantinian coins



7.4 *Notitia Dignitatum*: insignia of the Master of the Offices. After 390 his responsibilities included the arms factories (*fabricae*); hence the decorated shields, lances, helmets, and armour



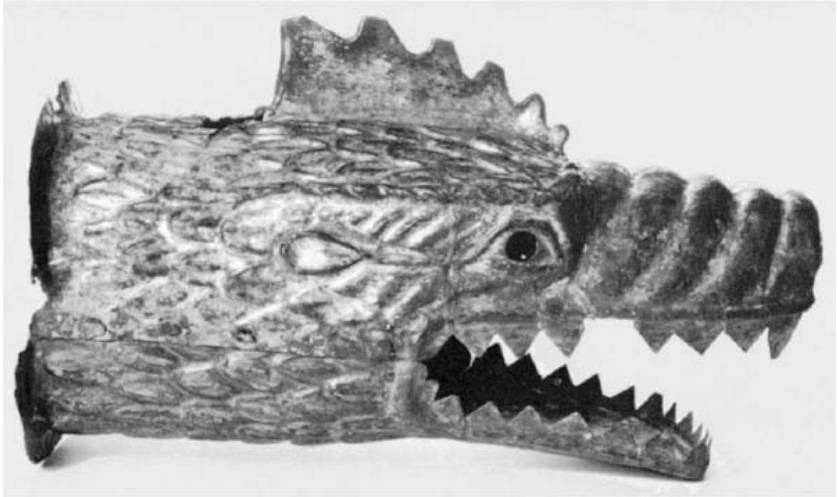
7.5 *Notitia Dignitatum*: insignia of the Count of the Sacred Largesses. His responsibilities included the mints, whose workmen evidently also produced gold belt-fittings (buckles, plates, strap-ends), palm-branches and silver donative dishes



7.6 The accession donative of five *solidi* of Valens, Valentinian I and Gratian, and a pound of silver



7.7 Silver and silver-gilt dish of Constantius II, weighing two pounds. Victory offers a wreath and palm-branch. The bodyguard carries a shield bearing a Chi-Rho. The emperor wears the diadem and a belted tunic, but no cloak: he is armed with a sword and lance



7.8 Snake (*draco*) battle-standard, of gilded bronze, 30 cm (12 in.) long, found at the German *limes* fort at Niederbieber. The windsock was attached at the end



7.9 Ivory diptych, c. 396, of Stilicho in uniform as *magister peditum praesentalis*, with his wife and son. His general's cloak is pinned with a 'crossbow' brooch; his shield carries miniature busts of the emperors



7.10 Glass beaker from Cologne, engraved with four late-Roman soldiers, each armed with two lances and a decorated oval shield



7.11 Fourth-fifth-century Christian cemetery at Concordia. The sarcophagi, as excavated in 1893, comprise the largest known collection of epitaphs of late-Roman soldiers



7.12 Silver donative dish from Geneva, showing Valentinian (I or II) standing in

battle-dress holding the *labarum* and an orb with Victory, flanked by guardsmen holding oval shields: the shield designs, especially the opposed animal heads, resemble those in the *Notitia Dignitatum*



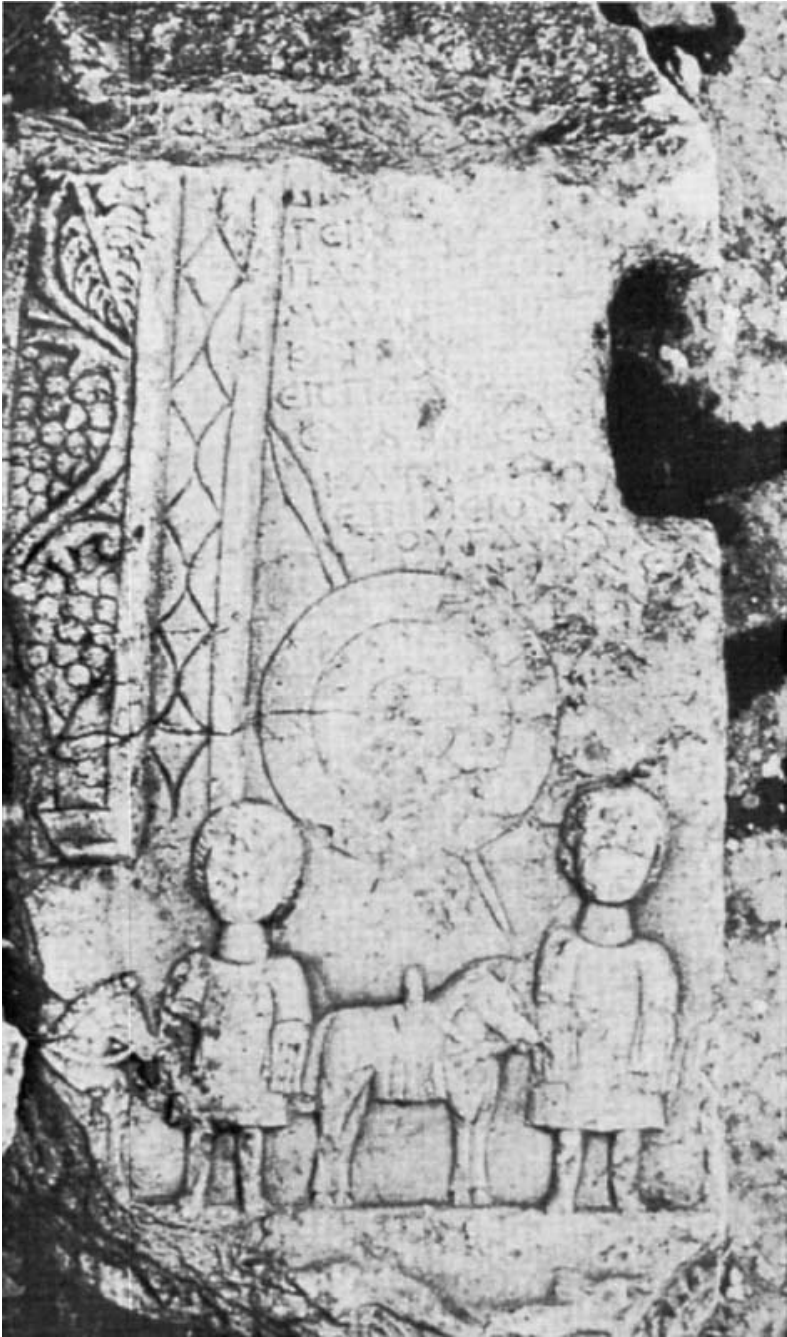
7.13 Letter-book from Panopolis. File-copies of letters sent out by the *procurator* of the Lower Thebaid, c. 300, directing payment of donatives to a legionary vexillation and the *equites promote* of *Legio II Traiana*



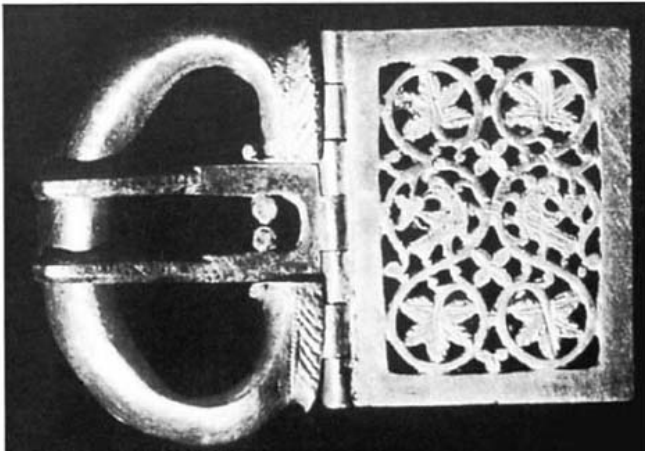
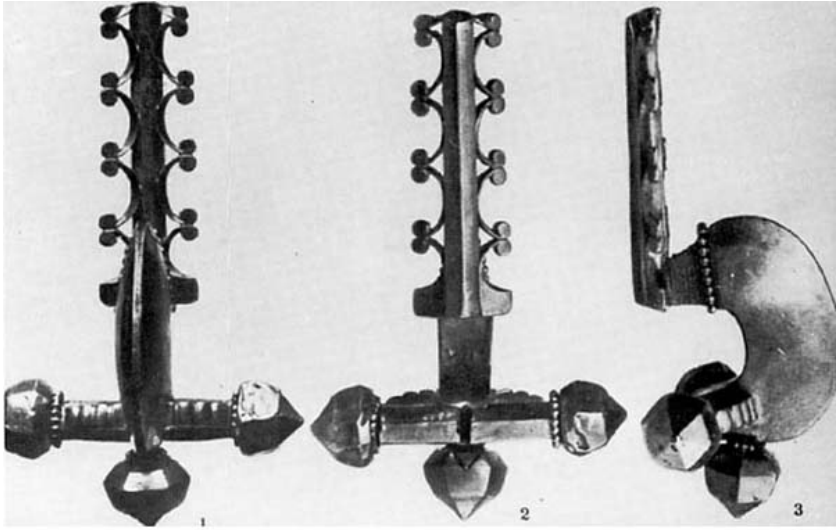
7.14 Silver donative dish of Theodosius I, dated to 388; his son and colleague Arcadius, with two Germanic guardsman, wearing torques and carrying decorated shields, are illustrated



7.15 Honorius in battle-dress on an ivory diptych dated to 406. The timid emperor wears a muscle cuirass and is armed with an imperial eagle's head-handled sword. He holds the *labarum* and is attended by Victory



7.16 Part of the tombstone from Phrygia on which a retired NCO of Diocletian's mobile army recorded his travels from one end of the Empire to the other



7.17 Ténès hoard consisting of four brooches, seven belt fittings, and four bracelets, all of gold and worn by an officer, from Cartenna, Mauritania Caesariensis: (a) gold crossbow brooch like that worn by Stilicho and his son; (b) gold belt-buckle like that in the insignia of the Count of the Sacred Largesses

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PART 4

• THE • FRONTIERS •

• MAINLAND • EUROPE •

Valerie A. Maxfield

The backbone of the frontiers of mainland Europe was formed by the two great rivers, Rhine and Danube. That this is so was not a matter of policy, of ambition successfully achieved; it came about by default. The Roman vision in the early days of the empire was for conquest of the entire world as it was then known, and this is what Augustus, the first *princeps*, the first general with supreme power to operate 'world-wide', set out to achieve, campaigning eastwards from the Rhine and planning a major expedition beyond the Danube. But this vision of *Imperium sine fine*, of world domination, came up against the realities of geography, in Europe the existence of a vast and inhospitable landmass across which tribes moved, the trend of whose advance was in a southerly and westerly direction, the direction of Rome. In retrospect it is possible to see that the turning point in Europe lay very early in the imperial period, well within the reign of Augustus himself, when his plans for conquest beyond Rhine and Danube were shattered by the Illyrian revolt of AD 6 and the Varus disaster of AD 9; the emperor lost his nerve and Rome lost the initiative. Though subsequent emperors would campaign beyond the two great rivers and incorporate new lands into the Empire the advances made were of no great size; nor were they very long lived. Their major significance lay in the improved communications they brought about between east and west, the Danubian and the Rhineland provinces. For much of their length and for most of the period the two rivers formed the boundary of Rome's European provinces, marking the limit of empire; but rivers do not make good frontiers. They may be bureaucratically convenient, providing clear lines of demarcation as long as the peoples on both sides agree to observe them, but

they are lines which are difficult to enforce, they are militarily weak; they are highways which unite, not barriers which divide.

The distance as the crow flies from the mouth of the Rhine in modern Holland to the Danube delta in south-east Romania is in excess of 2,000 km (1,250 miles); following the winding contours of the two rivers and such provincial territory as lay beyond, that distance more than doubles. By the mid-second century AD control of this extensive line was divided among the eleven governors whose provinces it bordered – Lower and Upper Germany, Raetia and Noricum, Upper and Lower Pannonia, Upper and Lower Moesia and the three Dacias (fig. 8.1). Each governor held his command direct from the emperor; there was no concept of an overall frontier command, though provincial commands might from time to time be united in response to military requirements, so that although the general frontier policies of individual emperors may be detected, the execution of those policies in detail varied from province to province.

For convenience of discussion the European frontiers have been divided into two broad sectors. Any division is arbitrary, since it has no contemporary reality, but a reasonably sensible break may be made on the borders of Raetia and Noricum. Raetia and the headwaters of the Danube best belong with the Rhineland: the remainder of the Danubian lands belong together.

The Germanies and Raetia

The boundary of Caesar's conquests in Gaul extended from Mare Nostrum to Oceanus, from sea to sea, the Mediterranean to the Channel. But in the north and east no such natural boundary was reached. It is clear from Caesar's commentaries that the *de facto*, if temporary, limit of land under direct Roman jurisdiction was regarded, by Roman and by barbarian, as the Rhine (cf. Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 4.4; 4.16). So it was to remain for the next forty years until the time of Augustus, for Caesar, preoccupied with more pressing concerns, launched no serious offensive across the Rhine. The river was adopted as a geographically convenient, though arbitrary, divide, which corresponded to no existing cultural distinctions. It attracted none of the paraphernalia of frontier control characteristic of later periods. The army which ensured the security of the newly-won Gallic territory lay back within the province itself, though few of its bases have been positively identified. The threat which this army constituted was, for the most part,

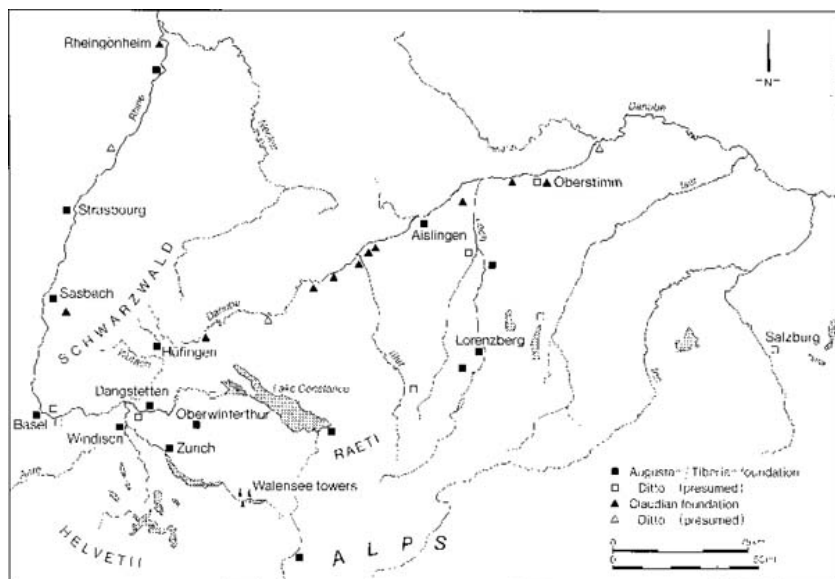


Figure 8.2 Pre-Flavian military sites in the upper Rhine and Danube regions

lay the Helvetii through whose territory then ran the highway to the north. Absorption of this region was the natural corollary to the opening up of the passes to the south, and it is at about this time that the presence of Roman troops is first archaeologically attested in Helvetian territory on the Lindenhof in Zürich and, perhaps slightly later, at Basel, at Windisch (Vindonissa) and Oberwinterthur (fig. 8.2). A series of stone-built watch-towers (three are known) along the Walensee above Lake Zürich, seems designed to oversee movement from the east, the territory of the Raeti, by water up the Walensee and via the river Limmat to Lake Zürich. Another site belonging to the period of the Alpine campaigns is that of Dangstetten which lies to the north of the Hochrhein near the entrance to the Wutach valley which gives access to the headwaters of the Danube from the important Rhine crossing at Zurzach. It is perhaps to be linked with Tiberius' activity in this area in 15 BC. Conquest of the Alpine tribes was vigorously promoted. In 15 BC Drusus and Tiberius took command and by 14 the Alps and Voralpenland were in Roman control. The way was now clear to launch the offensive beyond the Rhine.

Completion of the conquest of Spain in 19 BC had released the necessary troops and it is in the early years of the second decade BC that the first military bases appear on the Rhine itself, sites such as Vechten, Nijmegen, Xanten, Neuss and Mainz (fig. 8.3). In 16 BC the legate of Gaul, M. Lollius, had suffered a defeat at the hands of the Sugambri who had

invaded Gaul: a legion was lost. Augustus hastened to Gaul where he remained until 13 BC supervising preparations for the war. In 12 BC Drusus assumed command, launching the campaigns across the Rhine which he led until his death in 9 BC. Three main invasion routes were used. A sea-borne attack was launched in 12 BC from the area of Vechten around the Frisian coast to the mouths of the Ems, Weser and Elbe. A second line of attack led eastwards up the valley of the Lippe which flowed into the Rhine just upstream from the site of Xanten where an early military base lay on the Fürstenberg below the later, Claudio-Neronian, fortress. The large, 54 ha (133 acres) fortress of Oberaden, already abandoned by c. 9 BC, must belong to Drusus' activity here. The most southerly of the three routes originated from Mainz, whence the valleys of Main and Wetter gave access north and east towards the Elbe. Testimony of Drusus' activity in this area is provided by the short-lived supply-base at Rödgen in the Wetterau.

By 9 BC the Elbe had been reached. Drusus died and his brother Tiberius, appointed in his stead, campaigned to consolidate the gains. This vast expanse of land – the distance from Rhine to Elbe direct is 340 km (210 miles) – was to be reduced to the form of a province and one at least of the legions was moved forward from its base behind the Rhine to a newly-built 20 ha (50 acres) fortress site at Haltern. But within less than two decades Haltern and the new province were abandoned. In AD 6 Augustus was planning an attack on Maroboduus of Bohemia, a two-pronged attack north and west from Pannonia, eastwards from Germany and Raetia. Troops were withdrawn from the Rhineland for the campaign and control there left in the hands of P. Quinctilius Varus, a senator described by Paterculus as 'a man mild of nature and peaceable in his behaviour'. Clearly no trouble was anticipated. The Bohemian invasion was thwarted, first by a serious and prolonged rebellion in Illyricum ([p. 174](#) below); no sooner had this been suppressed than in AD 9 the Germans, under the leadership of the Cheruscan prince Arminius, rebelled, attacked and massacred Varus and the three legions that were with him (XVII, XVIII, and XIX). The Romans were driven out of the lands they had held a mere twenty years. 'The result of this disaster was that the Empire, which had not stopped on the shores of the Ocean, was checked on the banks of the Rhine' (Florus, *Epitome of Vornan History*, 2.30.39). Punitive campaigns followed, led first by Tiberius, later, after the death of Augustus in AD 14, by Germanicus. Despite the far-reaching nature of Germanicus' campaigns – he claimed to have conquered all the tribes between the Rhine and the Elbe – the erstwhile province was not restored. Germanicus was

recalled. Troops were pulled back to the left bank of the Rhine; two legions were based at Cologne in the territory of the Ubii, two at Xanten, two at Mainz and, further south, one each at Strasbourg and Windisch. Auxiliaries were stationed in their vicinity. Although the Rhine became once more the effective limit of the Roman provinces some supervision was maintained over the right bank. Forts were occupied in the Main-Wetter

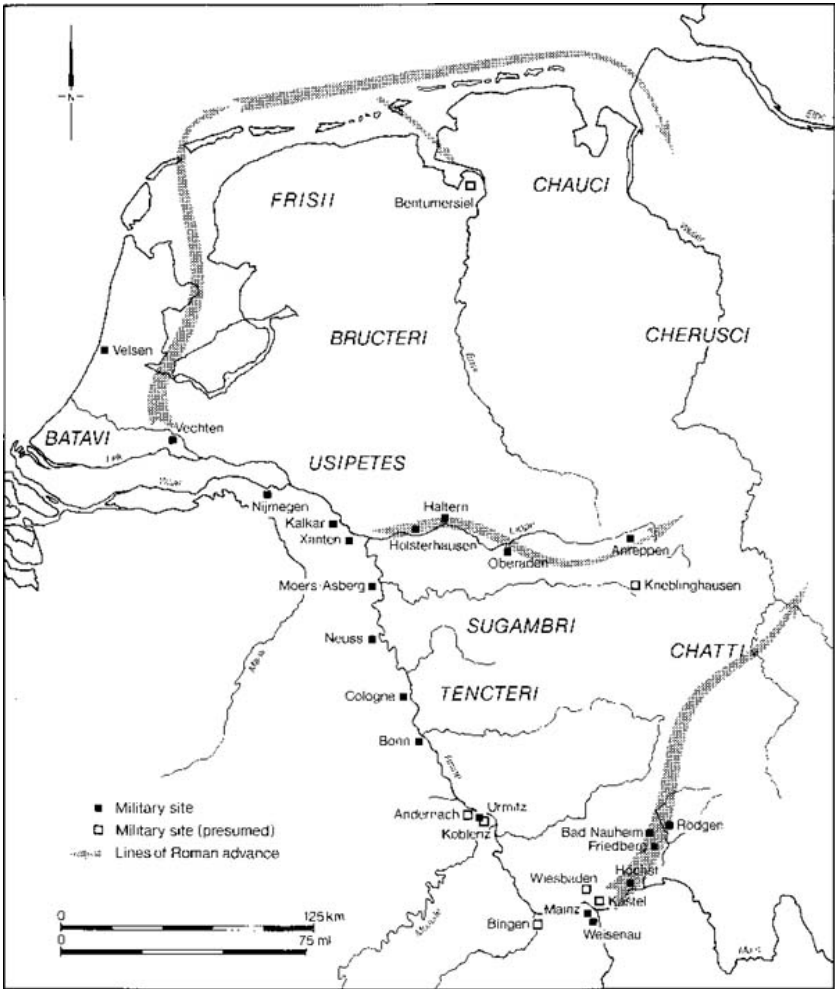


Figure 8.3 Augustan and Tiberian military sites in the area of the lower Rhine

area and, further north, beyond the Rhine mouth, the site of Velsen, established in connection with one of Germanicus' campaigns, remained in use into the Claudian period. The tribute imposed on the Frisii by Drusus in

c. 12 BC was still being collected by Rome in AD 28 when the officer in charge of the collection provoked a rebellion during which a Roman fort in Frisian territory (Velsen?) was attacked. It was not until AD 47 that Roman garrisons were finally withdrawn from this area. In that year the Chauci, northern neighbours of the Frisii, took advantage of the death of the commander of the lower German army to revolt and plunder the wealthy Gallic coasts. The new commander, the celebrated disciplinarian, Domitius Corbulo, took the situation firmly in hand; he settled the Frisii, hostile since the events of AD 28, constructed a fort on their lands to ensure obedience, and started to reduce them to the status of a province: at this point he was ordered by Claudius to desist and to withdraw all garrisons behind the Rhine (Tacitus, *Annals*, 11.19). Claudius, militarily committed in Britain at this time, did not wish to embark on further territorial expansion.

It was then, under Claudius, that the river bank in the area of the Rhine mouth first takes on the appearance of a controlled frontier line. Forts were disposed in a linear fashion at an average of 7 to 8 km (4.5 to 5 miles) distance from one another, along the river from the North Sea coast to the junction of Rhine and Waal (fig. 8.4). Where their garrisons are known all were occupied by cohorts, though not all these forts were large enough to hold a complete unit. Though no troops were then stationed beyond the Rhine north of the Wetterau some general Roman supervision continued to be exercised over the area and control was maintained over access across the river to the Roman province. In AD 58, for example, the Frisii and the landless Ampsivarii were refused permission to settle on territory 'set apart for military purposes', land intended for grazing horses and pack-animals but left idle. However from then on the Rhine, from its mouth to just south of Remagen, was to remain a frontier line; no subsequent attempt was made in this area to reconquer the lands beyond. Increasingly the lower Rhine was transformed from a base-line for attack into a controlled frontier line. The two-legion bases, relics of a campaigning army waiting to resume campaign, were broken up. In AD 35 the fortress of Cologne was abandoned; one of its legions, *legio* XX, moved north to Neuss, the other, *legio* I, moved south to Bonn. The double fortress at Xanten survived until 69 when it was devastated in the Batavian rebellion in which so many of the Rhineland sites were destroyed. A new single-legion fortress was built on a nearby site and another fortress constructed on the site of the old Augustan base at Nijmegen. In the reorganization following the Batavian revolt several new forts were constructed and the auxiliary troops, originally grouped quite close to the legions, came to be spread out in linear fashion in the manner so clearly foreshadowed by the Claudian

arrangements in the Rhine mouth area. A couple of fortlets and an observation tower are also known along the lower German frontier; on present evidence they do not appear to have been part of a regular sequence of such structures, but rather to have performed some localized function.

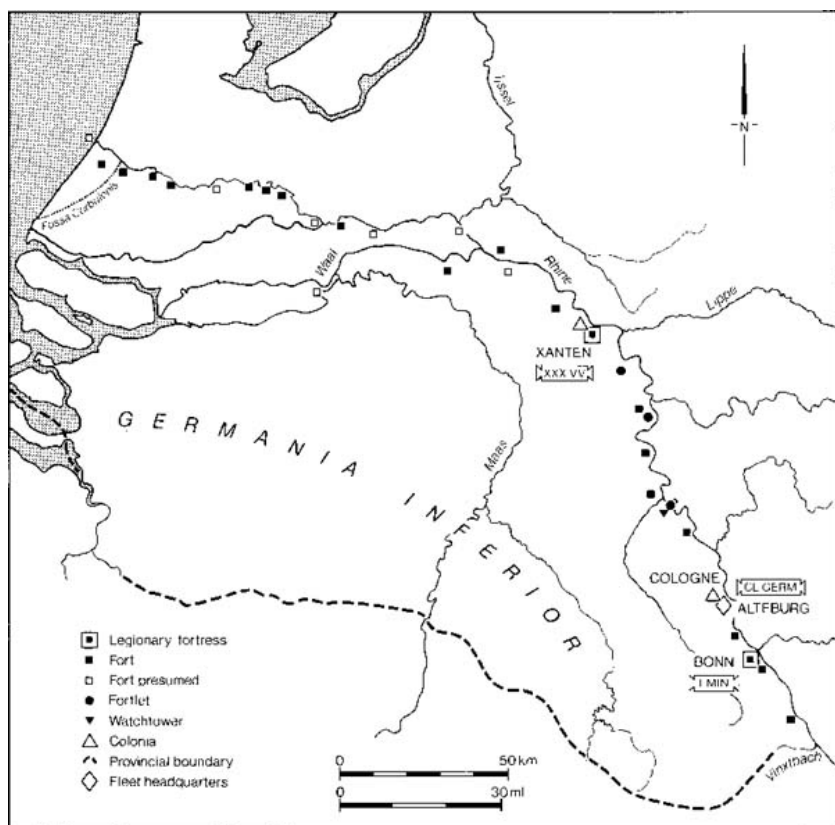


Figure 8.4 The Lower German *limes* in the mid-second century

These military installations were linked by a road along the west bank, and major routes led back into the interior of Gaul, to the coast at Boulogne, to Lyon, to Trier, whence supplies might be brought up to the troops. The river too would be used for purposes of supply, a fact which highlights one of the problems of the European river frontiers: both served as highways for civil and military traffic as well as marking the divide between Roman and barbarian. The bridges which spanned the river were guarded by forts from which troops could patrol the lands on the far bank. The waterway itself will presumably have been patrolled by the fleet, the *classis Germanica*, which had its base 3 km (1.8 miles) south of Cologne,

at the Alteburg, Köln-Bayentai, a site which it occupied from the period of Tiberius down to the middle of the third century. The distribution of the fleet's stamped bricks suggests the existence of several subsidiary bases, including Neuss and Xanten, but all confined to lower Germany where the river formed the provincial boundary.

The Danube wars of Domitian and Trajan caused some depletion in the size of the lower Rhineland army. By the early second century the legionary garrison had been reduced to two (based at Xanten and Bonn), but apart from these troop movements nothing occurred until the latter part of the third century to alter in any fundamental way the overall frontier arrangements as they had developed by the Flavian period. The picture in Upper Germany is, however, very different. With the exception of the bases of the Hochrhein area associated with the Alpine campaigns, and the Wetterau sites built, or rebuilt, after the Varus disaster, few military sites had been founded in Upper Germany by the death of Augustus. The rearward position of the upper Rhine, dominated in front by the thickly forested and sparsely populated area of the Schwarzwald, meant that it played no part in Augustus' German adventures. In the Tiberian period, in the wake of the withdrawal from Germany beyond the Rhine, two new legionary fortresses were established, one at Strasbourg on the left bank of the Rhine opposite the Kinzig valley, the other at Windisch on the plateau site occupied by the earlier Augustan base above the confluence of the Aare, the Reuss and the Limmat, a strategic crossroads at the foot of a pass over the Jura and controlling access to the Rhine, 15 km (9 miles) to the north up the Limmat valley. Forts were constructed at nodal points along the main communication links in the upper Rhine-Danube area ([fig. 8.2](#)). On the main routes east from Lake Constance and northwards towards the Danube, military posts appear at the major river crossings, many in dominant hill-top positions ([pl. 8.1](#)), and it may be as early as the late Tiberian period that the first forts were sited forward on the Danube itself, at Hüfingen, for example, at the exit of the Wutach valley, at Aislingen where a major route of prehistoric origin reached and crossed the river, and conceivably also in the area of Oberstimm, an important Danube crossing adjacent to the Celtic oppidum of Manching ([fig. 8.2](#)). All territory up to the Danube was under Roman control, but the only forts to be placed in a forward position were those which guarded the crossing points. This is a situation which can be paralleled at this same period in the middle and lower Danube provinces ([p. 175](#) below).

The pattern changed under Claudius. Then at latest Raetia was formally constituted a province; its northern boundary, the Danube, was fortified

with a line of forts which lay along the south bank at varying distances apart, their detailed siting determined by the local topography. The forts were linked by a road which, at its western end, cut across the Rhine-Danube re-entrant to join the Rhine at Sasbach. Communication between the upper Rhineland, Raetia and provinces eastwards was thus improved. This redistribution of troops within the upper Rhine-Danube area indicates a concern with the maintenance of security and improvement of communications within an area already under Roman control. Although Roman supervision was no doubt maintained over the right bank of the upper Rhine area no forts were moved forward into this region until the time of Vespasian when direct Roman control was extended over the upper Rhine-Neckar region as a whole. In AD 70 a legion was brought back to Strasbourg, which had had only an auxiliary garrison since the departure of *legio II Augusta* to Britain in AD 43, and shortly afterwards Vespasian's legate in upper Germany, Cn. Pinarius Cornelius Clemens, won triumphal ornaments 'for successful exploits in Germany' (*CIL* XI, 5271). A milestone of AD 74, bearing Clemens' name, has been found at Offenburg, just east of the Rhine, and attests the laying out of 'a direct route from Strasbourg into Raetia' (*CIL* XIII, 9082). The first of a series of forts at Rottweil (Arae Flaviae) on the upper Neckar was founded, and a line of forts installed along the Strasbourg– Raetia road (fig. 8.5). Further north the first military bases appeared east of the Rhine at Gross Gerau, at Ladenburg and Heidelberg-Neuenheim along a north-south route which was to link the legionary fortress at Mainz with the strategic route network of the Upper Danube and with the Raetian provincial capital at Augsburg. Meanwhile the left bank forts were abandoned.

The effect of the Flavian campaigns was to bring into the Empire land, much of which was of no great value in itself, heavily forest-covered and sparsely populated, but which brought about an improvement in the communication link between Germany and Raetia, between Rhine and Danube, cutting across the awkward re-entrant angle between the headwaters of the two rivers. Whether Vespasian had more extensive plans is not known. His short-lived successor, Titus, promoted no further campaigning here, but is attested building a fort at Kösching on the Danube, which lies, significantly perhaps, north of the river.

In AD 83 Domitian launched a campaign against the Chatti, north of the Wetterau: he took the title *Germanicus* in commemoration of his success in late summer of that year, and subsequently celebrated a triumph. The reality of the Domitianic war is, unfortunately, masked by the hostility of the historians who recorded it. In terms of new territory acquired the

archaeological evidence points to little that had not already been absorbed by the time of Vespasian or earlier. A frontier line was drawn which lay short of the heartland of the Chatti, north of the Wetterau. The achievement seems to have fallen short of the aim which led Domitian to amass an expeditionary force composed of troops drawn from both the upper and lower German armies as well as from Britain. Perhaps it was the first stirrings of trouble in the Danube lands which led him to abandon greater schemes; whatever the reason the last opportunity for a major military initiative in Germany was lost.

In AD 89 the commander of the Upper German army, Antonius Saturninus, took advantage of the Emperor's absence from Rome to raise a rebellion in which he was joined by the neighbouring Germanic tribes. The revolt was quickly put down by the Lower German army, but in its aftermath and consequent on the need for further troops on the Danube, the Upper German army was depleted in numbers: Mainz, the last of the German legionary bases to retain a two-legion establishment, was now reduced to one. The redistribution of troops and the new frontier arrangements made in the face of this loss of initiative are indicative of the intention to control lands held rather than to aim for further advance. The advent of trouble on the middle and lower Danube meant that the focus of military activity had now shifted east. The Rhineland was left with only such resources of manpower as were necessary to secure what was already in Roman hands.

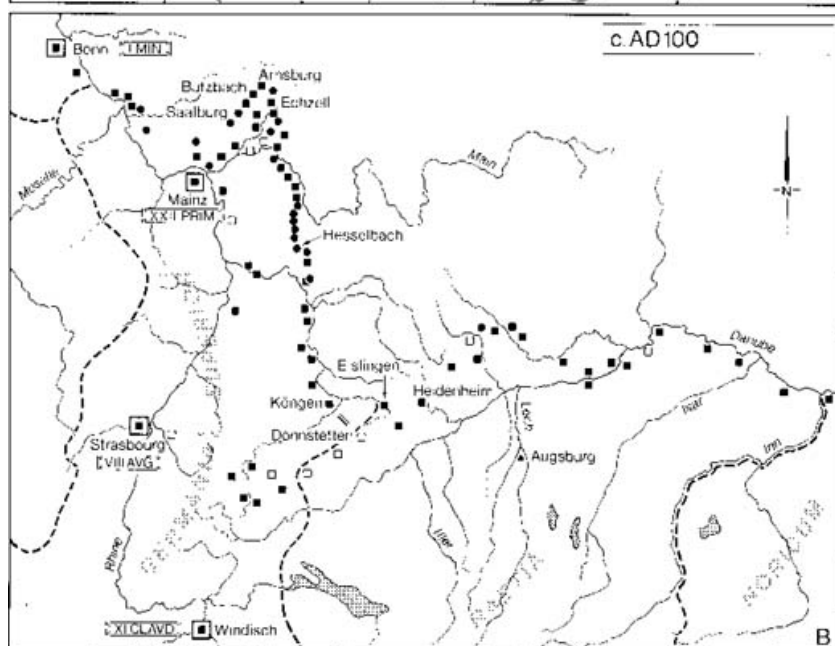
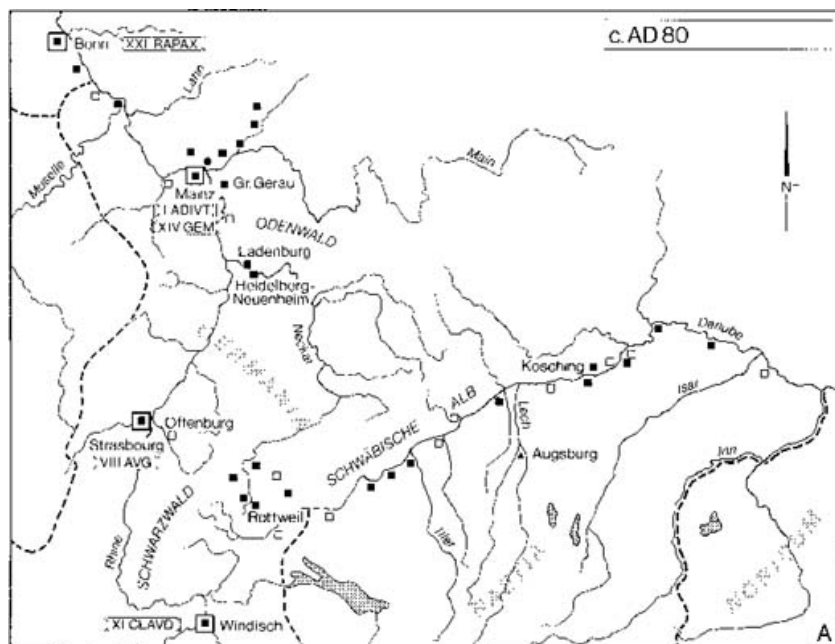
It was some time during the 80s, and no doubt as a result of the wars of those years, that the two provinces of Upper and Lower Germany were formally constituted from the territories of the upper and lower German armies: an acknowledgment of the fact that greater Germany was not to be conquered. The provincial reorganization occurred some time between September 82 and October 90, with the territories being carved out of the Gauls. The lower province had its capital at Cologne, the upper province at Mainz where legionary fortress and provincial capital were to develop side by side. The border between the two lay on the Vinxbach, a small stream which flows into the Rhine south of Remagen. Here a dedication to the deities which preside over ends, *Finibus*, has been found, and altars to the spirits of the place, erected by soldiers of both the Upper and Lower German armies.

It is probably to the situation in the Taunus–Wetterau area of the frontier that Frontinus alluded when he wrote in his *Strategemata* (1.13.10):

When the Germans in their usual manner kept emerging from their

clearings and hiding-places to attack our troops, finding a safe place in the depths of the forest, the Emperor Domitian, by advancing the *limites* through 120 miles not only changed the character of the war but brought the enemy under control by exposing their hiding-places.

The line of the Domitianic *limes* is indicated on [fig. 8.5b](#). Swinging south-eastwards from the Rhine it skirts the Neuwied basin before cutting across the ridge of the Taunus mountains which it follows eastwards and northwards to encircle the fertile valley of the Wetter. Along this line a road or cleared strip was laid out through the forest, with observation towers placed at 500–600 m (550–650 yard) intervals (more or less according to visibility) along it. These towers were simple four-post structures 2.5–3 metres square (8–10 ft), each surrounded by a ditch, normally circular, occasionally square. A number of small earth and timber fortlets have been identified in association with this line, for example to the east of the later fort of the Saalburg ([fig. 8.6](#)) at Ockstadt ([fig. 8.7](#)) and at Kernel. Their siting would appear to be associated with routes which cross the frontier line. The troops which manned these installations were presumably provided by the forts which already lay to the south in the Wetterau. This line, road, watchtowers and



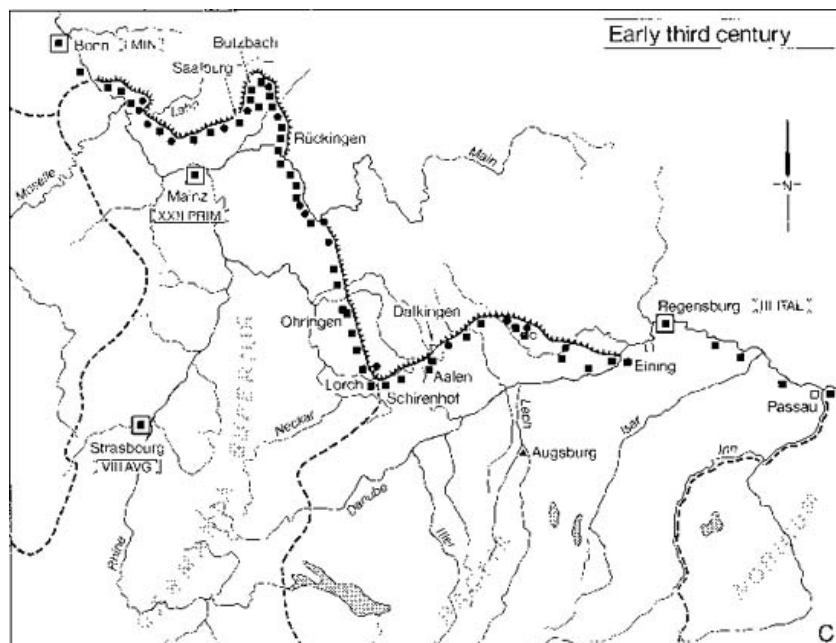


Figure 8.5 The development of the Upper German-Raetian *limes*: (a) c. AD 80; (b) c. AD 100; (c) early third century

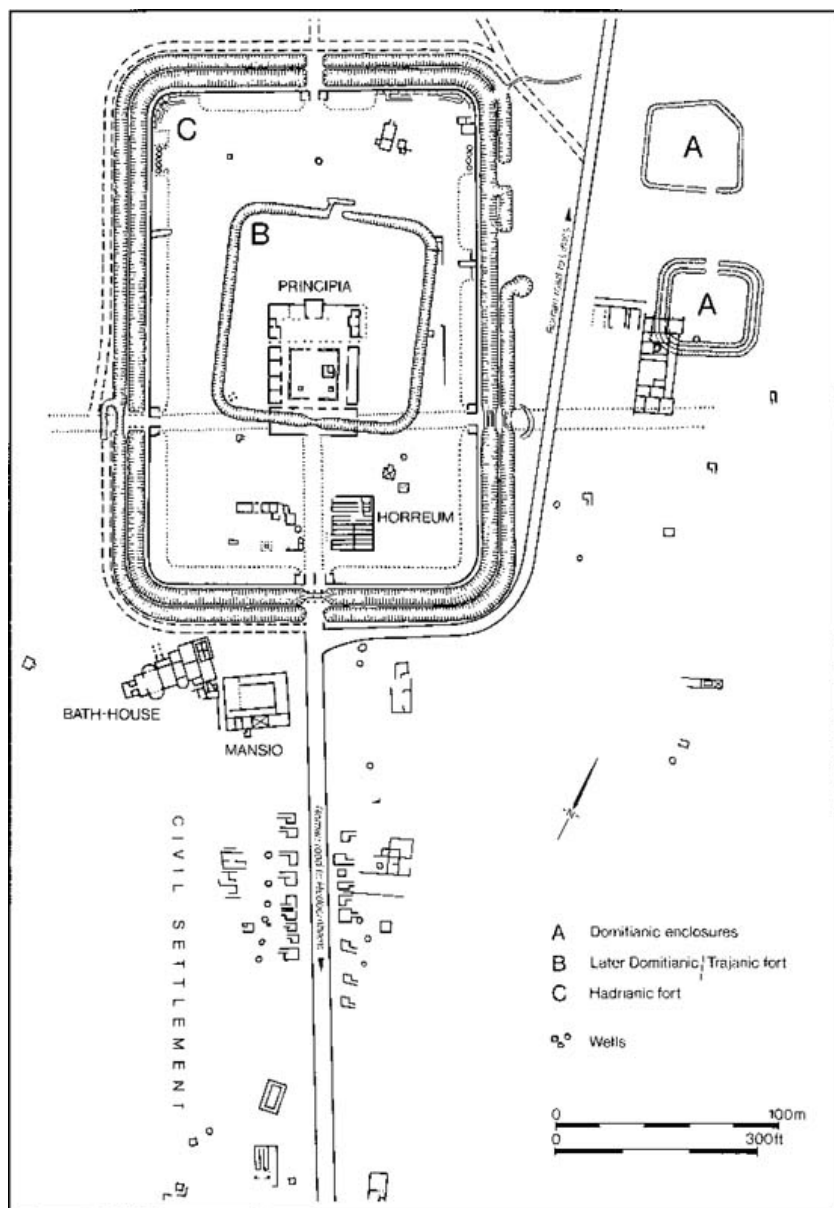


Figure 8.6 Saalburg: forts, fortlets and civil settlement

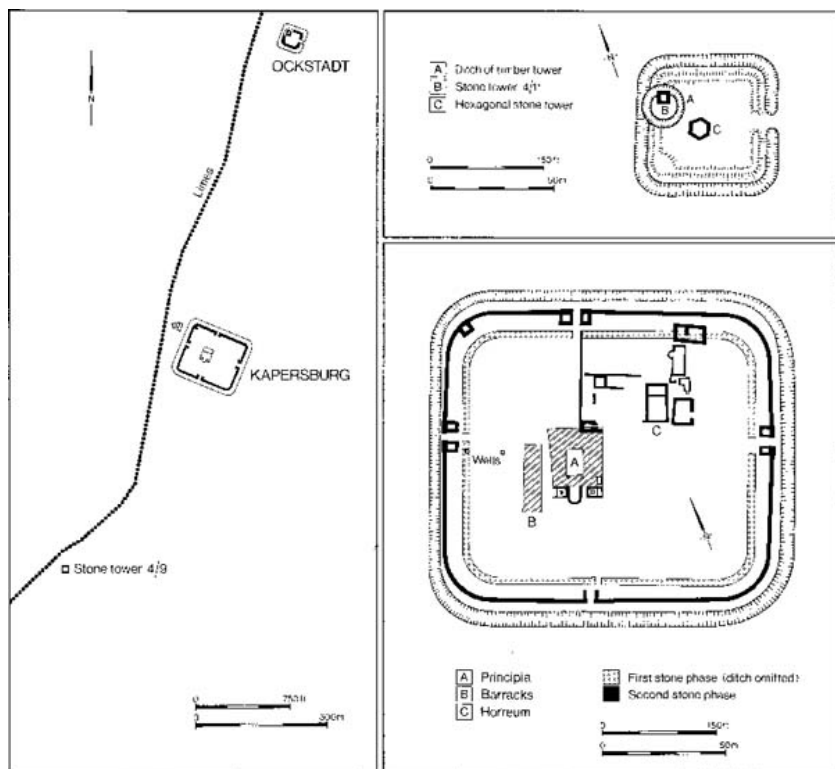


Figure 8.7 The Upper German *limes* between towers 4/9 and 4/11: Ockstadt fortlet, overlain by a timber and stone watchtowers, replaced by the *numerous* fort of Kapersburg: the two-phase stone fort overlies an earth and timber fort (not shown)

small military posts, is analogous to the arrangements on the Gask Ridge in Britain (p. 201 below) and will have served a similar function – observation and control of movement into the province.

The construction of these frontier works, road, watch-towers and fortlets, is conventionally dated to the early to mid-80s, in the aftermath of the Chattan war; however, a recent reconsideration of the dating evidence (specifically the samian pottery) from the fortlets on the frontier line suggests that their occupation begins no earlier than *c.* 90, rather than *c.* 83/4. Viewed in historical terms it would thus appear that these early developments of the frontier in the Taunus-Wetterau area came about in the wake of,

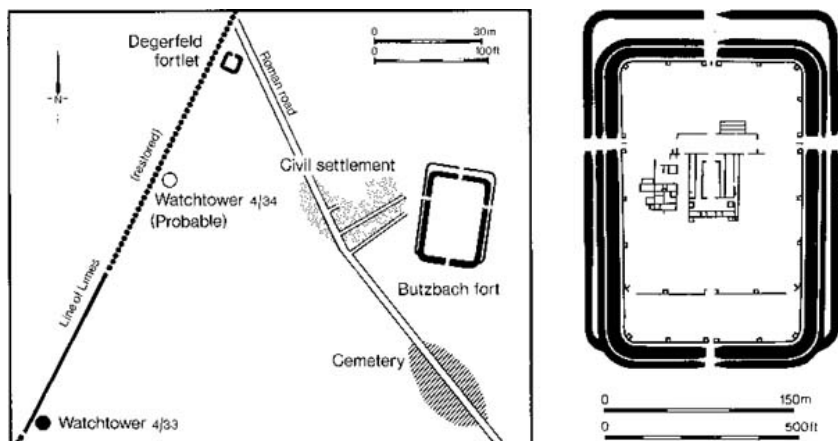


Figure 8.8 Left: upper German *limes* in the area of towers 4/33 and 4/34. Right: detail of the Butzbach fort

and no doubt as a response to, the events surrounding the Saturninus revolt in AD 89, and were not, perhaps, unconnected with the growing problems of the Danube frontier.

The paraphernalia of frontier control gradually developed in the later first and early second centuries as Domitian, Trajan and then Hadrian eschewed further advance in Germany. Late in the first century a small fort was built at the Saalburg to the west of the earlier fortlets and below the later fort (fig. 8.6). Some auxiliary forts were now added to the forward line, for example at Butzbach, a major crossing-point of the frontier in the western Wetterau where a road from Mainz came northwards via Friedberg towards free Germany (fig. 8.8). At Arnsberg, close by the point where the Wetter is crossed by the *limes* a fort guarded another frontier crossing, and some 12 km (7½ miles) to the south a 5.2 ha (13 acre) fort, one of the largest on the whole of the German *limes*, was built at Echzell, whence the frontier line ran south to reach the river Main at Gross Krotzenburg.

To the south and east, in the province of Raetia, a number of forts had been advanced, during the Flavian period, northwards from the Danube to the Swabian Alb. Epigraphic evidence points to this having begun under Titus at Kösching, while excavations at Heidenheim suggest a date *c.* 90 for the establishment of this large fort designed to accommodate the *ala II Flavia milliaria*, the only milliary *ala* attested on the German-Raetian *limes*.

These frontier arrangements continued to evolve under Trajan who showed no

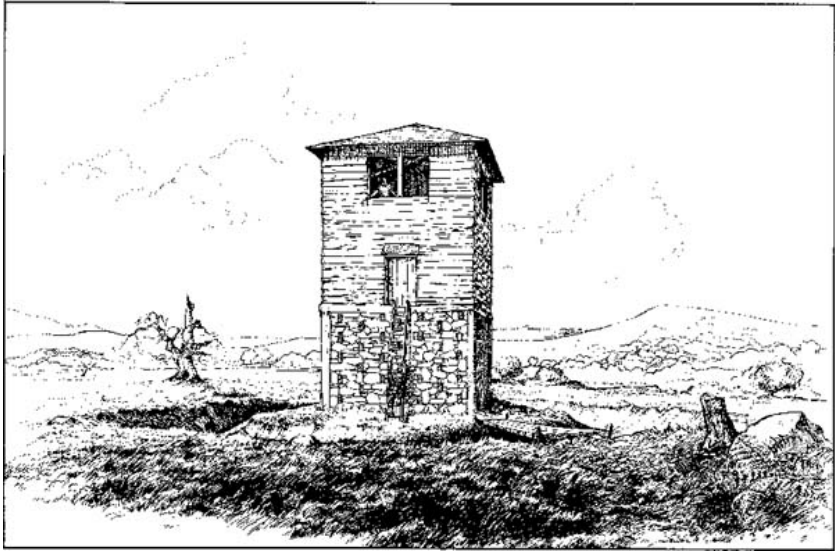


Figure 8.9 Odenwald *limes*: timber tower on a dry-stone base

interest in further advance in Germany, whose campaigning ambitions lay further east, and whose policy in the Rhineland and upper Danube, in so far as one can be determined, continued that of Domitian's later years, with a gradual tightening up of frontier control. Indeed, in the absence of epigraphic evidence it is often difficult to tell in detail which of the frontier constructions belong in the latter part of Domitian's principate and which to that of Trajan. Further forts were built on the frontier line itself and more fortlets to house the troops charged with the task of patrolling its line, as for example at Degerfeld, guarding the *limes* crossing adjacent to the fort site at Butzbach (fig. 8.8). It was under Trajan, too, that the link in the frontier between Main and Neckar was established. This link, the so-called Odenwald *limes* runs roughly north-south across country between the river Main by Worth and the middle Neckar at Wimpfen. It consists of a military road watched over by observation towers of dry-stone and timber construction (fig. 8.9) and controlled by troops based in the ten small forts (average size 0.6 ha or 1½ acres) and intervening fortlets irregularly spaced along the 70 km (53-J miles) of its length. The positioning of these sites appears to be determined by topography, for they lie where natural routeways penetrate the line of the frontier. Excavation of one of these small forts, Hesselbach (fig. 8.10), showed that it was designed for a complete, if small, unit, for it contained a headquarters building and an officer's house in addition to accom-

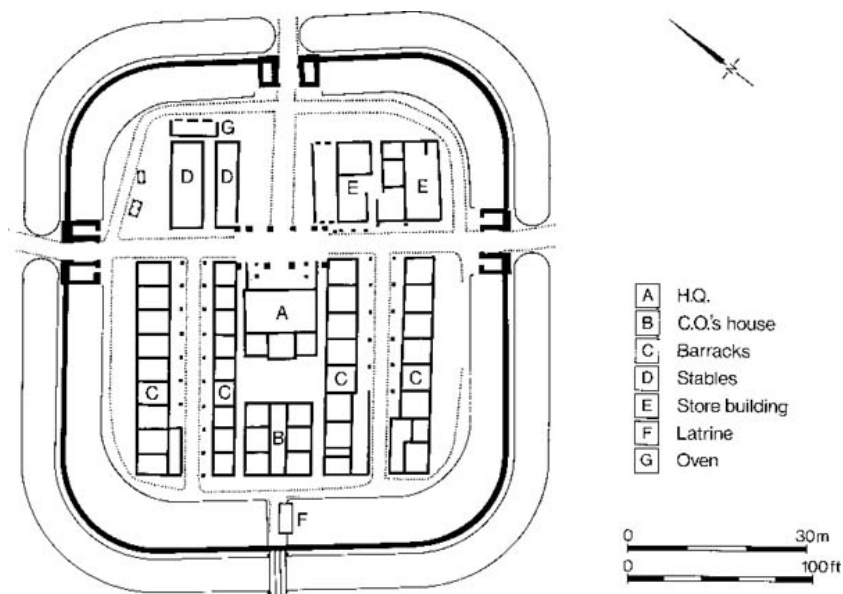


Figure 8.10 The *numerus* fort at Hesselbach

modation modulation for an estimated 150 men. It is known from inscriptions that in the mid-second century Hesselbach and the other Odenwald forts (with the exception of Oberschiedental and the west fort at Neckarburken) were occupied by *numeri*, irregular units, and it is probable that this was so from their foundation.

When the frontier line reached the middle Neckar by Wimpfen, the *limes* road followed the course of the river southwards, running sometimes to its east, sometimes to its west, taking the course of greatest convenience. *Numerus* forts gave way to auxiliary sites, six in a 70 km (43½ mile) stretch, and no further watchtowers and fortlets were provided. From Köngen, the most southerly of the Neckar *limes* forts, the road turned east into Raetia.

It was probably in the early second rather than the late first century that a line of timber watch-towers comparable to those on the Taunus–Wetterau–Odenwald *limes* was begun in Raetia across the open land of the Alb *limes*, though the sequence appears never to have been completed at its western end. Moving the *auxilia* on to the frontier line led to the abandonment of forts in its hinterland, sites such as Wiesbaden and Hed-dernheim, which were now handed over to the civil authorities and *civitates* established. Eventually, with the exception of Friedberg in the Wetterau, all forts in the rear were given up and military control was limited to the long narrow strip of the frontier itself; the position contrasts markedly with that in Britain

(Chapter 9) where a deep band of military sites continued throughout the occupation behind both the frontier walls. This contrast does not however represent any fundamental difference in approach to frontier control; it is simply a function of geography, for the mainland European frontiers were of such length in proportion to the overall size and garrison strength of the provinces they fronted that all available troops could be comfortably disposed along them. Here too, perhaps, lies the reason for the extensive use in Germany of *numeri* in frontier control. *Numerus* forts appear, not only on the Odenwald *limes*, to the virtual exclusion of auxiliary sites, but are interspersed with the *auxilia* (largely equitate cohorts) along the Taunus and Wetterau. The very length and lack of depth of the military zone was to prove a fundamental weakness when the frontier came under attack.

The Hadrianic contribution to the German-Raetian frontier was consolidation of the *status quo*. In 121–2 the emperor visited Germany and it was then no doubt that he instigated the construction of the artificial linear frontier work which demarcated the edges of the province. Hadrian's biographer states that:

at this time and on frequent other occasions in many places where the barbarians were divided off not by rivers but by *limites*, he separated them from us with large stakes sunk deep into the ground and fastened together in the manner of a palisade. (*Historia Augusta, vita Hadriani*, 12.6).

No province is mentioned by name in connection with this passage, but the frontier work described matches perfectly what has been found in Germany and Raetia. Hadrian's frontier work here was a palisade, a substantial wooden fence. It was constructed of large oak timbers, roughly 0.3 m (c. 12 in.) in diameter, set side by side in a trench sunk a metre or more (over 3 ft) into the ground (fig. 8.11). The timber uprights were in places wedged in position with stones, while the fastenings alluded to by the biographer are attested by the presence of nails. In places where it runs through waterlogged ground its timbers have survived. The palisade may be conjectured to have stood to a height of about 3 m (10 ft) above ground. The purpose of such a palisade would appear to be administrative rather than military; to mark the line of the frontier, the edge of the empire, where no alternative linear demarcation existed. This is apparent from the fact that the palisade exists only where there is no river frontier. Lower Germany has no palisade. It begins where the Upper German *limes* diverges from the Rhine, runs through the Taunus and Wetterau and ceases on the Main. It

resumes in the Odenwald, ceases on the Neckar and resumes again on the Alb *limes* where it continues to the point where the frontier meets the Danube at Eining.

Meanwhile the programme of fort building and restoration continued. The fort at Butzbach was redesigned for a new unit with its defences and main buildings construc-

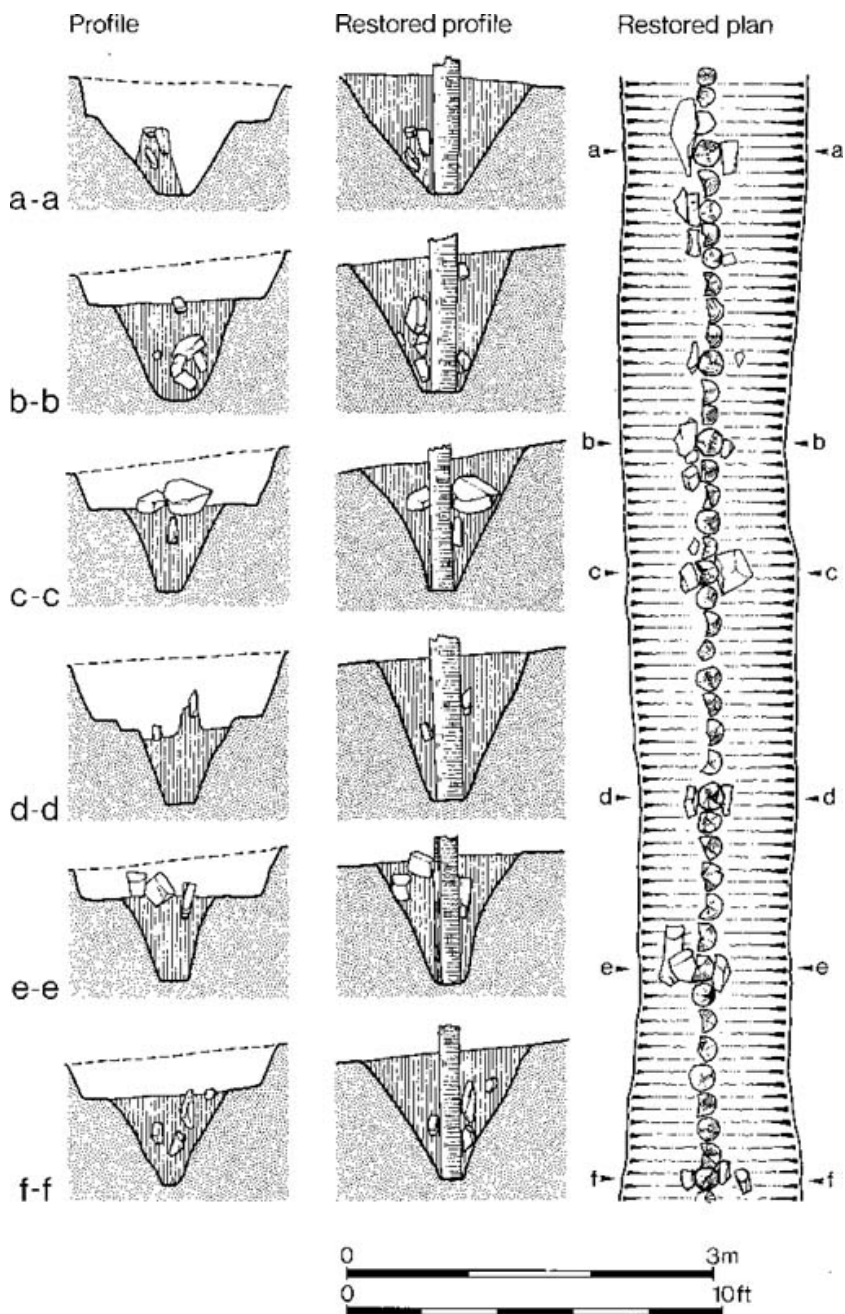


Figure 8.11 Profiles of the Upper German palisade trench between towers 3/66 and 3/67 (after ORL)

ted in stone; its erstwhile garrison, *cohors II Raetorum*, was moved to the

Saalburg where the small Domitianic fort had been levelled and a new 3.2 ha (8 acres) fort constructed over its remains (fig. 8.6). The *numerous* fort at Hesselbach and other sites which had stood for the three and more decades since their Domitianic foundation, were rebuilt in stone.

The Hadrianic palisade does not represent the very earliest use of a linear earthwork on the German frontier. There exists in the exposed northern part of the Wetterau, running about 90 m (100 yards) in front of the road and towers, a stretch of ditch which had upright timbers planted in its bottom. It is overlain in places by the Hadrianic palisade. Recently aerial reconnaissance has revealed traces of two parallel ditches with a palisade behind running across country from the middle Neckar at Köngen, south-east in the direction of Donnstetten, the so-called Sibyllenspur (fig 8.12). Limited excavation of this earthwork and an associated fordet at Dettingen-unter-Teck suggest a date in the very late first or early second century. These pre-Hadrianic features are however localized in appearance and function, designed in some way to give extra protection to the frontier sectors in which they lie. They contrast with the overall Hadrianic conception.

The German-Raetian *limes* underwent a continuous development from Domitian to Hadrian; at first nothing fundamental changed under Pius. Many of the timber towers, decaying now no doubt, were replaced in stone on sites adjacent to their timber predecessors (figs 8.13 and 8.14). Some had already been replaced under Hadrian. The majority of these new towers were square, with an external measurement of 4 to 5 metres (13–16 feet); a few were hexagonal. The foundations were nearly a metre (3 ft) deep and the walls not far short of a metre thick at their base. Inscriptions indicate that this work was under way in 145–6. Yet, before his death in AD 161, Pius had instigated a significant change, abandoning the Odenwald-Neckar line in favour of a forward position, the outer *limes*, no more than 30 km (18½ miles) to the east (fig. 8.5c). The reason for the

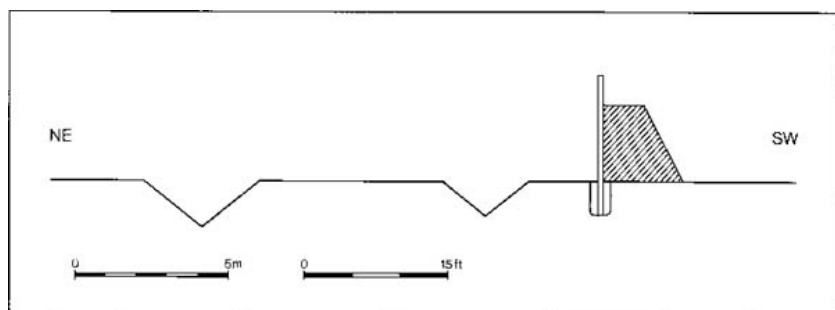


Figure 8.12 Restored profile of the Sibyllenspur; the rampart is hypothetical

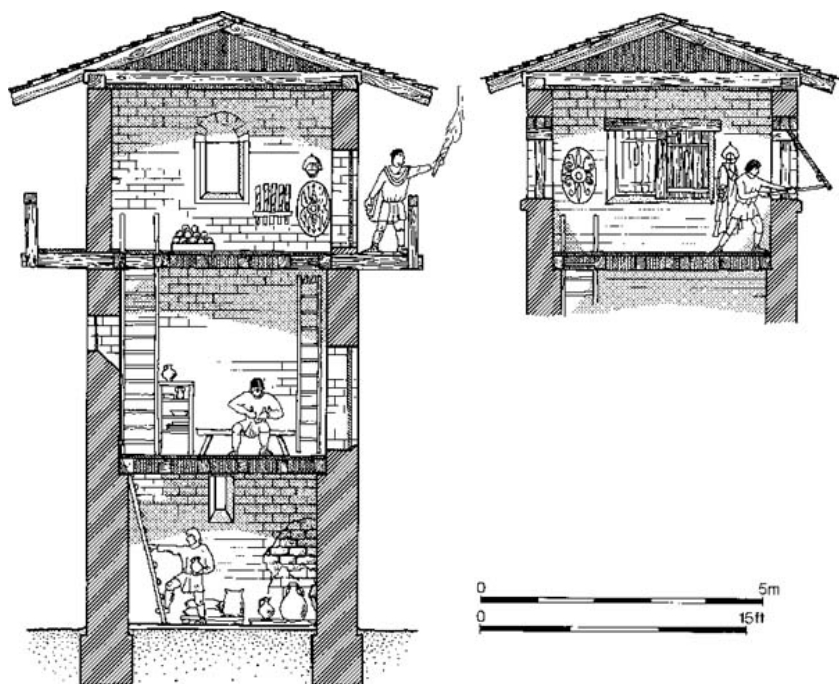


Figure 8.13 Hypothetical section through a stone tower. Alternative restorations for the upper floor show (left) a projecting outer gallery or (right) large windows for observation (after Baatz)

advance would appear to be economic rather than military. It involved no substantial campaign; it received, as far as is known, no mention from the historians and Pius took no imperial salutation because of it. The land embraced within the new frontier is no doubt territory over which Rome already exercised some supervision; indeed it is probable that the west fort at Öhringen (the Burgkastell) was already held as an outpost from the Odenwald-Neckar *limes*. The territory now taken within the Empire was good agricultural land; the new frontier lay on the western edge of the keuper sandstone which bore heavy pine forests. The frontier works of the inner *limes* were repeated on the outer line. A new palisade and stone towers were built (there are no timber towers on the outer *limes*), and fort garrisons, *auxilia* and *numeri*, advanced to new stations. As on the inner *limes*, the forts were interspersed with fortlets, not on the rigid system imposed on Hadrian's Wall but according to the dictates of local conditions. An equivalent adjustment necessarily occurred at the western end of the Raetian *limes* where,

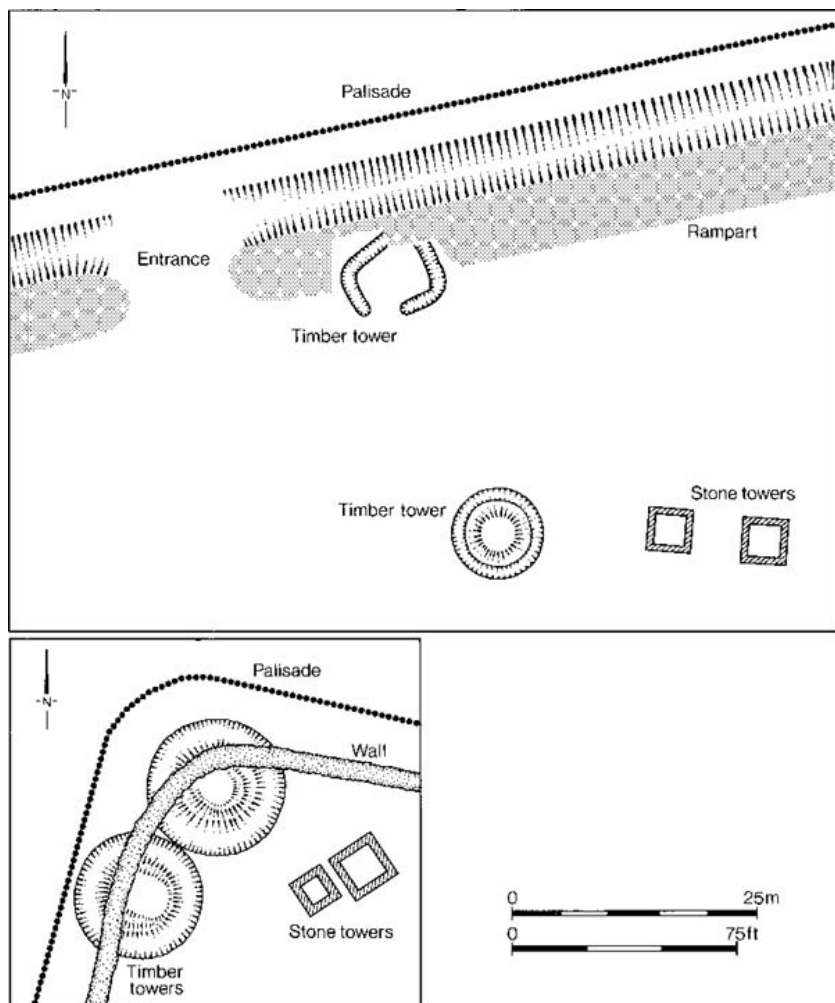


Figure 8.14 Building sequence on the Upper German *limes*: watchposts 1/59 and 3/61. The palisade was added after the two successive timber towers. A stone tower later replaced the timber. Finally, a rampart (1/59) or a wall (3/61) was added (*after ORL*)

among others, the *ala II Flavia milliaria* moved forward from its earlier base at Heidenheim to a new fort at Aalen. The date of this move can be defined no closer than between 148, the date of two inscriptions from Böckingen on the outer *limes*. A likely candidate for the governor in charge of the move in Upper Germany is C. Popilius Carus Peto who is recorded as a legate of Pius 'in the province of upper Germany and of the army stationed therein' in c. 152–155. The area between the two frontiers was demilitarized. The land was handed over to the civil authorities and a

civitas set up.

The Antonine advance was the last forward move of the German–Raetian *limes*; the frontier maintained this position for just another hundred years. During this time it underwent one major structural modification, of no tactical significance whatever. In the province of Upper Germany the palisade in the Taunus-Wetterau area and on the outer *limes* was supplemented by the construction of a rampart and ditch, the so-called Pfahlgraben, behind the palisade line, the timbers of which were perhaps by now in a state of disrepair (figs 8.15 and 8.16). The ditch was V-shaped, 6 to 7 metres (19 to 22 ft) wide and about 2 metres (6½ ft) deep. The upcast from it was heaped, in an apparently unrevetted mound, behind its inner lip with no berm between the two (pl. 8.2). There is no evidence of any palisade along the top of the rampart or of any obstacles being planted in the ditch. In a few short sectors in the Taunus a dry-stone wall was substituted for the bank and ditch, presumably because of the difficulties of ditch-digging through the rocky ground (fig. 8.14). The earthwork is not absolutely continuous. East of the fort of Holzhausen in the western Taunus there is an inexplicable gap of 6.4 km (4 miles). Short gaps occur on swampy ground in the eastern Wetterau and on some very steep slopes. A row of massive timbers continued the line of the palisade bank and ditch for 150 m (165 yards) across the wet ground of the Doppelbiersumpf south of Rükingen. The *limes* road was here constructed of a corduroy of timbers. There were also, of course, small gaps through bank and ditch at other points as, for example, where roads crossed the frontier line, points which were commonly guarded by watch-towers if not by forts or fortlets (figs 8.8 and 8.14).

The date of the Pfahlgraben is uncertain. It clearly post-dates the move to the outer *limes* for it is not found in the Odenwald; hence there is a *terminus post quern* of AD 148. The single piece of specific dating evidence comes from the *limes* crossing north of the Saalburg where a coin of AD 194 was retrieved from a burnt deposit which underlay the body of the rampart. Whether this date should be transferred to the entire Pfahlgraben is doubtful for it has been suggested that repairs may have been made to the earthwork at this point. An earlier date is suggested by evidence from the Zugmantel area ; one sector here, which was subsequently realigned, appears to have had no stone towers associated with it. All are of the timber and dry-stone construction characteristic of early Trajanic work on the Odenwald *limes*. It is doubtful if such towers would have stood for nearly a hundred years. A late second rather than an early third century date

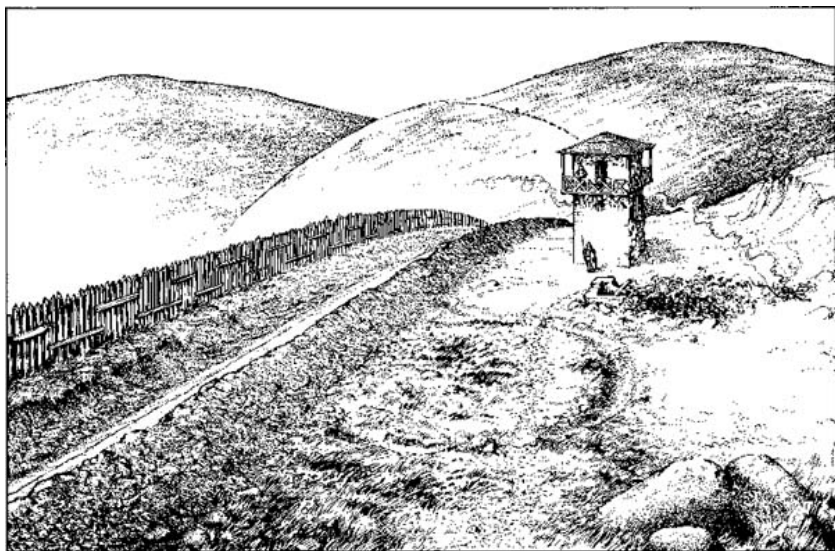


Figure 8.15 Upper German *limes*: final form showing palisade, pfahlgraben, and stone watchtower

for the initial construction of the bank and ditch would seem better to accommodate the evidence.

In Raetia a stone wall, commonly known as the *Teufelsmauer* (the Devil's Wall) replaced the palisade (fig. 8.17). This was 1.2 m (4 ft) wide, constructed of roughly coursed masonry on shallow foundations (fig. 8.18); where it ran across swampy ground it was founded on a bed of pile-driven logs. Its original height may have been some 3 to 4 m (10 to 13 ft). It was continuous except where it crossed streams or was cut by roads. There is a gap of some 4 km (2½ miles) between the end of the *Pfahlgraben* and the start of the *Teufelsmauer* which began, at its western end, on the slope leading down to the *Rotenbach*, between the forts of *Lorch* and *Schirenhof*. A ford sits close by its terminus. At its eastern end it runs right down to the *Danube* downstream from *Eining*.

The Raetian wall is as poorly dated as the *Pfahlgraben*. It post-dates the construction of the earliest stone towers for it characteristically butts up to the sides of them. Evidence from excavation of the *limes* crossing at *Dalkingen* (fig. 8.19) suggests a date in the latter part of the second century. In places the structural sequence in Raetia is complicated by the existence of a third linear barrier, the *Flechtwerkzaun*, a type of wattle fencing. This post-dates the palisade but pre-dates the stone wall which overlies it in places;

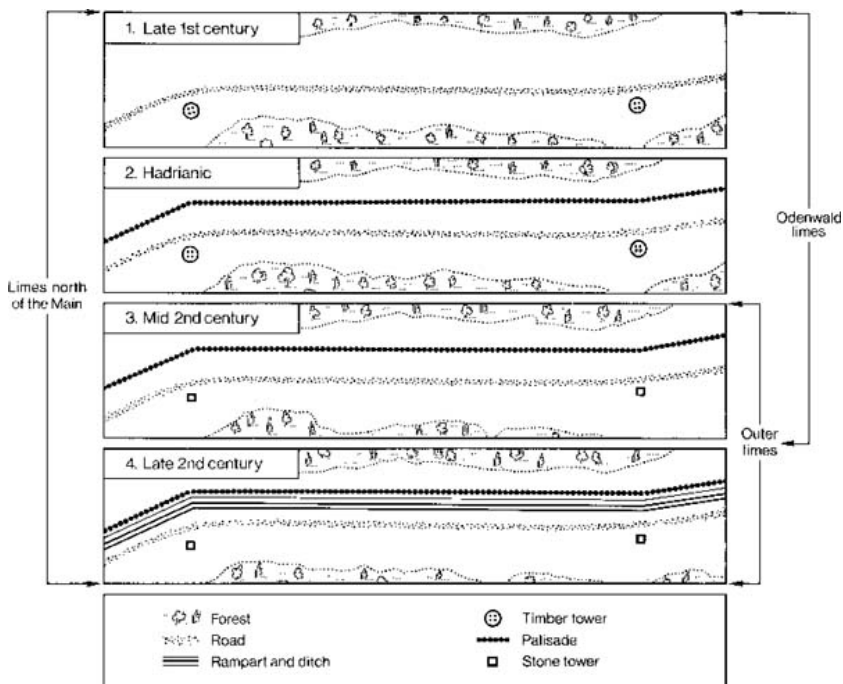


Figure 8.16 The four building phases of the Upper German *limes*

it pre-dates some stone towers, post-dates others (fig. 8.20). It would appear to be a local replacement for the timber palisade where it was in a state of decay.

The German-Raetian frontier, thus strengthened, stood until the 260s, but was subject to increasingly frequent barbarian attack. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius the Chatti invaded, causing damage in the Taunus-Wetterau-upper Main area, including some destruction within the *civitas* of Heddernheim. The Raetian frontier appears to have escaped relatively unscathed from the Marcomannic wars (166–175; 178–180) whose effects were felt most strongly further to the east in Pannonia. One effect of these wars was, however, to bring a legion (*III Italica*) back to Raetia, to a new fortress at Regensburg, while some redeployment of troops in Upper Germany is attested by building work at Niederbieber, Butzbach and Osterburken. These movements, localized as they are, can be seen as a constant refining of frontier control in the face of increasing unrest. In 213 the Alamanni make their first appearance; Caracalla is recorded as campaigning against them and it is to this period that the construction of the Pfahlgraben

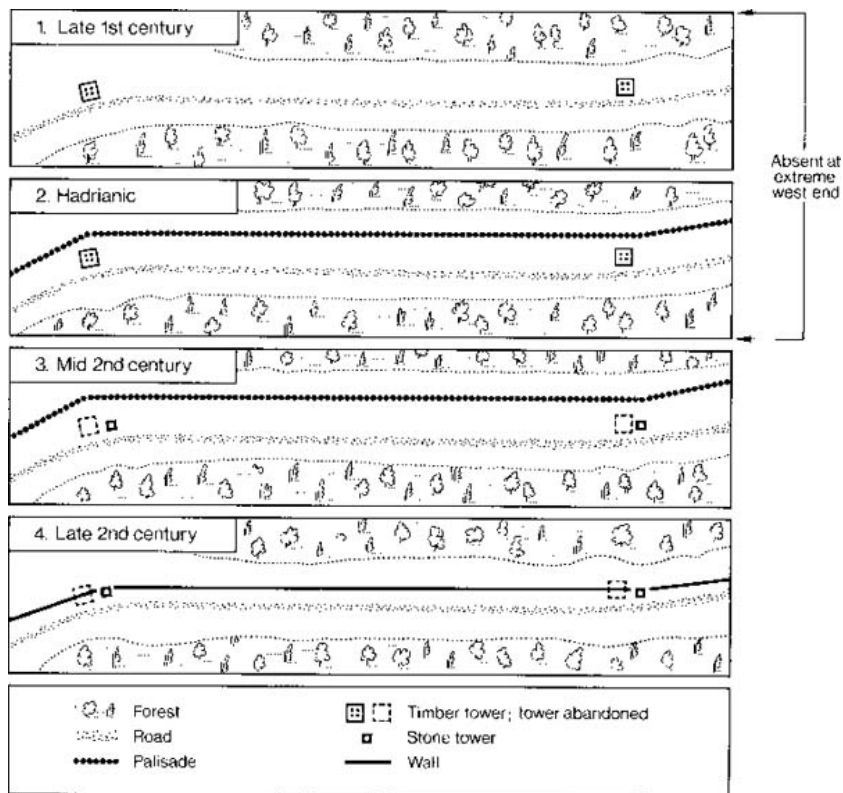


Figure 8.17 The four building phases of the Raetian *limes*

and Teufelsmauer are commonly attributed, though as indicated above, an earlier context would now seem more likely.

The growing insecurity of life in the frontier area is reflected in an increase in the number of coin hoards buried and never retrieved. In 233, in the time of Severus Alexander, a major Alamannic invasion was directed at Upper Germany and Raetia. There was widespread destruction, the effects of which have been noted in numerous forts and their *vici* the length of the frontier. A counter-offensive was launched and the frontier restored by Severus Alexander's successor, Maximinus Thrax. Forts were rebuilt, with the exception of Pfünz which was now abandoned; the immediate crisis was past but the situation was not fully retrieved. Pressure from the Alamanni continued. The, by now, static Roman frontier garrisons, strung out thinly along the *limes*, were not competent to meet such a challenge and there was no mobile reserve.

In or about AD 260 all lands east of the Rhine and north of the Danube were evacuated. The Verona list states that during the reign of Gallienus

(253–268) ‘the *civitates*

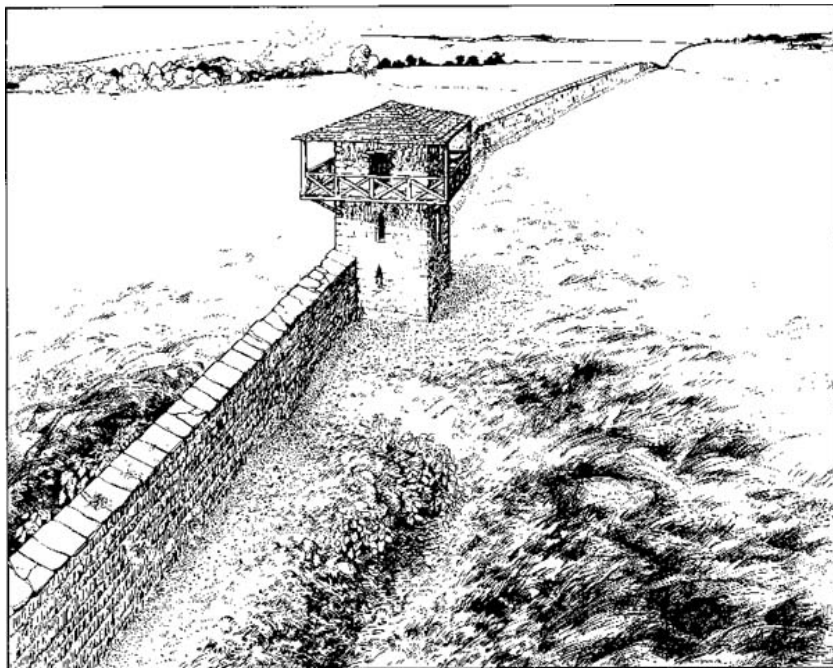


Figure 8.18 The Raetian *limes*: final form showing the stone wall and a stone watchtower

across the Rhine were occupied by barbarians’ ; the archaeological evidence is consistent with this statement. The army withdrew to behind Rhine and Danube, reoccupying many of the positions which they had held in the Julio-Claudian period before the Flavian offensive was launched. The defences of the long-abandoned legionary fortress of Windisch were restored by order of a governor of Upper Germany (*CIL* XIII, 5203), while an example of local self-help in time of crisis is provided by the hill-top site at the Wittnauerhorn, about 20 km (12 miles) to the west, where an Iron Age fortification was recommissioned at about this time as a civilian refuge.

One of the major problems arising from the loss of territory beyond the rivers was the control of the re-entrant angle between their upper reaches, where valleys led south into the diminished province. The route from Italy across the Alps via Helvetia to the Hochrhein, militarily crucial in terms of the Augustan advance, now acquired a new and sinister significance as a possible route of penetration by invaders into Italy, as indeed occurred in 270. Following further incursions by Alamanni, Burgundians, Goths and

Vandals in 277 and 278 into the upper Rhine and Danube region, and their

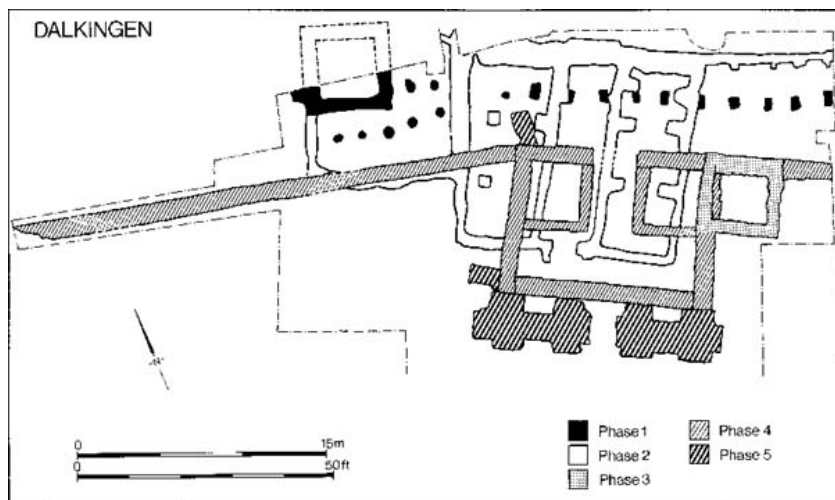


Figure 8.19 The crossing through the Raetian *limes* at Dalkingen

successful expulsion, Probus, who is recorded on an inscription of AD 281 from Augsburg as ‘restorer of the province’ (of Raetia), began the first systematic fortification of the area, along the upper course of Rhine and Danube with a link between the two major rivers being established along the valley of the Hier, the most westerly of the main south-north flowing Danube tributaries (fig. 8.21). The work begun by Probus was continued by Diocletian. A series of strongpoints was set up along the Hochrhein from Basel on the river bend to Burg at the western end of Lake Constance, around the south side of the lake to Bregenz, from there to Kempten on the Hier and thence via Kellmunz to the Iller-Danube junction and eastwards along the Danube. At Eining, for example, a small *castellum* was constructed in one corner of the earlier fort. Sites along the routes into the interior were also fortified either at this time or in the fourth century when, in the wake of renewed Alamannic attacks in the early 350s and again in the 370s, the emperor Valentinian strengthened and augmented the frontier arrangements, adding a string of close-spaced stone watchtowers along the Rhine-Iller link, and building bridgehead fortifications across the Rhine at Basel, at Whylen opposite Kaiseraugst and at Rheinheim opposite Zurzach.

These upper Rhine defences were designed to protect not just the immediate province which they flanked but lands which lay well behind, above all Italy. No less vulnerable was Gaul, whose unwalled cities and affluent countryside lay open to attack, once the frontier had been

breached, by the Alamanni from the south and east and the Frankish confederation in the north beyond the lower German *limes*.

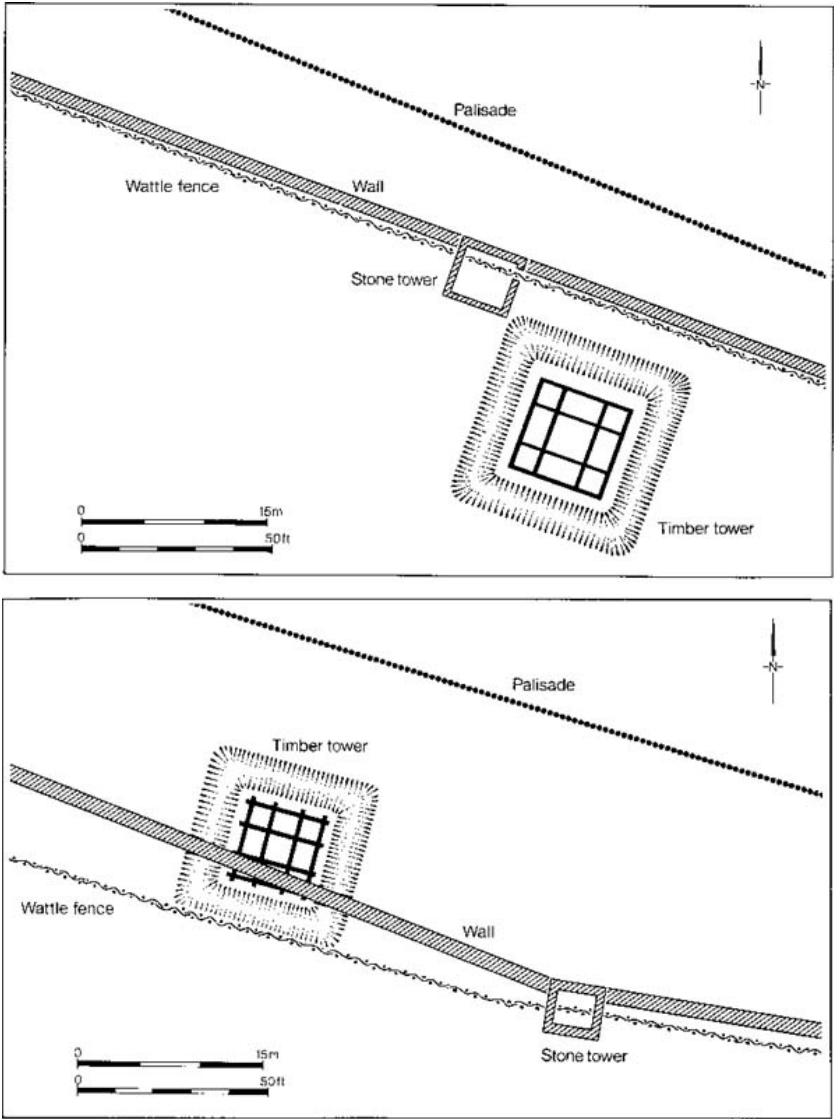


Figure 8.20 The Raetian *limes* by towers 14/15 (top) and 14/17 (bottom). The structural sequence is : timber tower with the addition of palisade; palisade replaced by wattle fence; timber tower replaced by stone tower ; stone wall replaces wattle fence (*after ORL*)

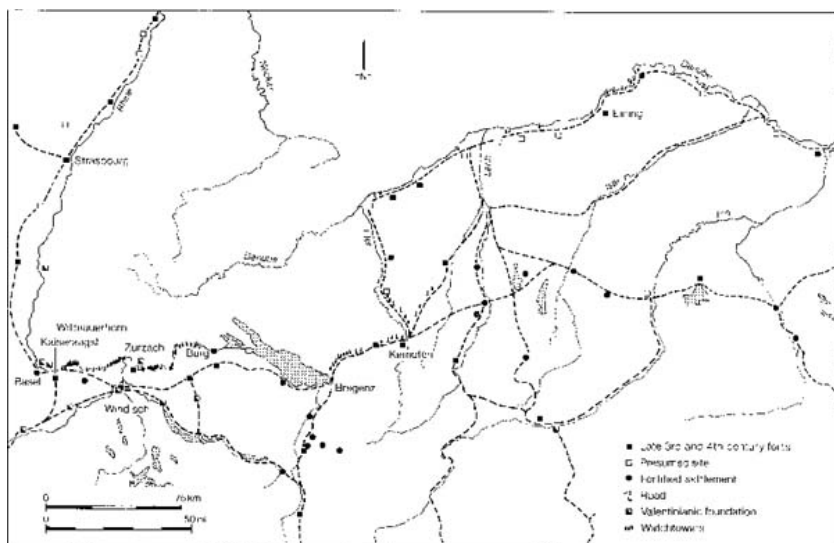


Figure 8.21 The late-Roman *limes* on the Danube-Ilser-Rhine

In 256 both attacked. The Franks crossed the lower Rhine and penetrated deep into the province. Counter-measures were taken, first by Gallienus who is credited with the title *restitutor Galliarum* (restorer of the Gauls), and subsequently by the Gallic usurpers, Postumus and Victorinus. In the aftermath of these incursions, in or soon after 260, the most northerly sector of the lower German *limes* was abandoned (fig. 8.22). No fort from the Rhine mouth to south of the Waal confluence can be shown to have been occupied after that date, and the occupation of Zwammerdum ended in destruction. The land abandoned by Rome was soon settled by the Franks, and the outer edge of the province retreated to the south bank of the Waal. Along this line and its continuation up the lower and middle Rhine, an extensive programme of building and updating of defences in the new heavily defensive style of architecture was undertaken in the late third and fourth centuries. At Xanten, for example, a fortified enclosure with thick walls and projecting semi-circular towers, some 16 ha (39½ acres) in size, was constructed in *c.* 310 in the middle of the *colonia* site, and at Cologne a new bridgehead fortification with narrow defensible gates and projecting circular towers was built on the right bank of the river at Deutz, immediately opposite the main east-facing gate into the city.

The events of the 250s and the renewed devastating invasions of 275 and 276 had shown how vulnerable Gaul was once the frontier was breached. The excellent road system which linked the frontier garrisons with the interior of the province led the

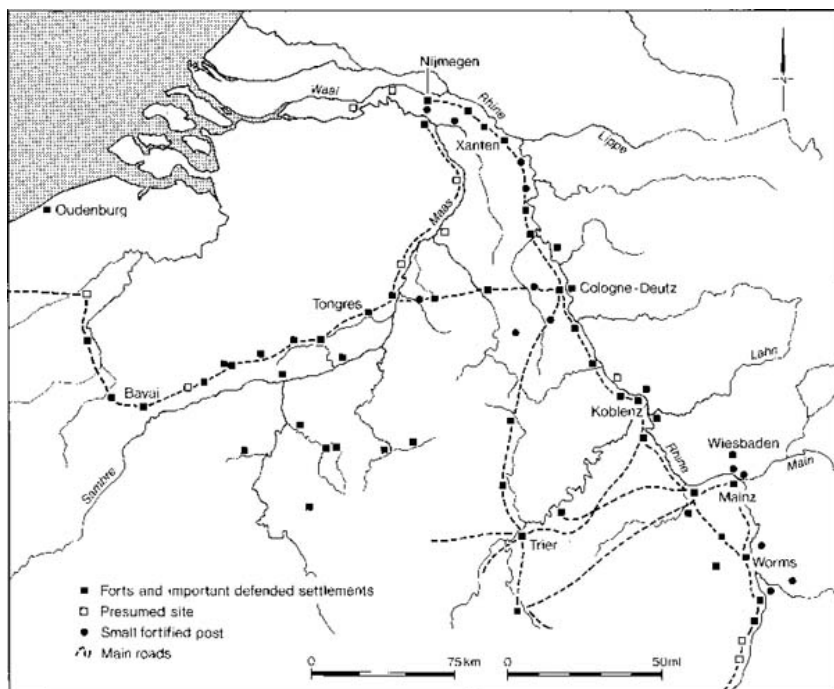


Figure 8.22 Late-Roman fortifications on the lower and middle Rhine

invading barbarians direct to the un walled towns. One result of this was a massive programme of civic walling. Every urban settlement of any size acquired walls, not to protect the whole community, for large areas, often including major civic buildings, were left outside the walls, but creating a citadel, a defensible strongpoint where refuge might be sought (by the army? by those in authority?) in times of crisis. Such a measure is a gesture of despair, not a planned policy of defence in depth as it has been described. Another development which occurred was the construction of fortified posts at regular intervals along all major roads, especially the vital trunk routes which led from the coast to the frontiers and from the frontiers to the interior of the province, the vital supply lines for the army. Measures such as these and, it should be added, the fortification of the coasts against sea-borne invaders, though they might delay, could not prevent the end.

Behind its renewed defences Gaul enjoyed a period of relative calm until the middle of the fourth century. During the period of civil strife which followed the usurpation of Magnentius in 350 the Alamanni began once again to infiltrate the province. The victor in the civil war, Constantius II, entrusted the Gallic command to the able Julian who in 357 defeated the Alamanni and in 358 came to terms with the Franks who had taken

advantage of Julian's preoccupation with the Alamanni to infiltrate the area south of the Maas. Julian's accession as Augustus in 360 took him away from Gaul, but as long as he remained alive the barbarians were quiescent. News of his death in 363 was the signal for renewed invasion. However the new emperor, Valentinian, paid particular attention to the Rhineland frontier. He resided in Gaul from 365 until 375 and put in hand measures for strengthening the frontier defences, including the construction of watchtowers along the Rhine–Hier–Danube *limes*. Valentinianic work is the latest detectable phase in the fortification of many of the frontier sites. Given the men to support them the frontiers could have held, but these they were denied as the troops were needed elsewhere. In 401 Stilicho withdrew troops from the Rhineland for his offensive against the hordes of the Visigothic king Alaric who had invaded Italy. On the last day of December 406 Vandals, Suebi, Burgundians and Alans swept across the Rhine and devastated Gaul. No longer could the integrity of the frontiers be maintained by the static troops (such as still remained) strung out along them. Their survival depended on the ability of the mobile field army to drive out such invaders as breached their line. Some of the invaders were allowed to stay with federate status : Burgundians settled on the left bank of the middle Rhine, Visigoths in Aquitania. Increasingly Rome's armies were manned by these federates : the frontiers no longer separated Roman and barbarian : the barbarians were in the Empire.

The Danube frontier

It was in 146 BC, following the defeat of Perseus and the collapse of the Macedonian dynasty that Rome established her first province in the lands beyond the Adriatic, Macedonia, and acquired a foothold in Illyricum. It was over a century later that Roman arms were first carried as far as the Danube, and not until the principate of Augustus that the bulk of the lands between Adriatic and Danube came under direct Roman control. Thenceforward, although indirect Roman suzerainty would be exercised by diplomatic means well beyond the banks of the river, the Danube itself, for the greater part of its length would serve as the imperial frontier, a clear and unmistakable line around this edge of the empire, but a line, like that of the Rhine, which was not easily defensible.

The Danube flows over a distance of 2,800 km (1,740 miles) from its origins on the south-eastern slopes of the Black Forest to its delta on the

Black Sea. The country through which it flows changes considerably and frequently between its Alpine origins and its flat and marshy termination. There are spectacular, scenic sectors where the river flows through steep-sided gorges, as in western Noricum from Passau down to Linz, in Pannonia in the Waizen Gorge where the river changes the direction of its flow from west-east to north-south to cross the Hungarian Plain, and in Moesia where the river cuts through between the Balkan mountains and the southern Carpathians, entering a steep and dangerous defile where rocks, rapids and whirlpools make navigation hazardous (pl. 8.3). The most serious obstacle to navigation is the Iron Gate, the Prigrada, a ledge of rock which juts out from the left and almost reaches across to the right bank of the river. The current here, before the engineering works of the last decade, which raised the water level, was in excess of three metres (10 ft) a second. Communication above and below the Iron Gate was impossible until this obstacle could be by-passed. By contrast the outer bank of the river is utterly open and exposed in the stretch south of Budapest (Aquincum), where the loess cliffs of the right bank look out over the flat expanse of the Great Hungarian Plain, and to the south of the Wallachian plain where the river flows in a channel 1 to 2 kilometres ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles) wide towards its delta, an area of vast swamps and freshwater lakes. The severity of the climate is such that the middle and lower Danube used to be ice-bound almost every winter: in such conditions its value as a deterrent to movement is nil.

The province of Macedonia, once annexed, had to be defended from Thracian aggression to the north; an overland route through Illyricum to the west was clearly desirable, and yet it was not until the establishment of the Principate that a concerted attempt could be made to confront the area's problems. Thrace and Illyricum were the scenes of sporadic but unco-ordinated campaigns by republican generals to protect existing interests and, in the harsh conditions of the mountainous Balkan terrain, to harden up armies. Military glory was hard-won in this formidable area, progress inevitably slow, and these campaigns did not result in annexation and direct control of further territory.

In 35 BC Octavian Caesar embarked upon a limited campaign against the Iapudes and Pannonians ; he captured Sisak (Siscia) in the valley of the Sava and established there a garrison of twenty-five cohorts. In 34–33 he tackled the Delmatae. In 29–28 Licinius Crassus was given command of the army of Macedonia to launch a punitive campaign against the Dacians and the Bastarnae from beyond the Danube and the Moesi from north of the Stara Planina (the Balkan mountains) who were harassing the Thracian

peoples who were in a treaty relationship with Rome, and threatening Macedonia itself. Crassus won a major victory, asserting Roman control over that area south of the lower Danube which was to become the province of Moesia, some time before AD 6. For the time being Thrace south of the Stara Planina was left as an independent kingdom.

Augustus' first priorities after his acquisition of power were the problems in Spain and the east. Thereafter he turned his attention to Illyricum and in a series of concerted campaigns between 14 and 9 BC, led down the Sava and Drava and northwards from Macedonia, Roman control was established over an area from the Adriatic to the



Figure 8.23 The Danubian provinces: military sites in the Julio-Claudian period

Danube. The Illyrican command, hitherto a senatorial appointment, now passed into the gift of the emperor, for it was a significant military post. In AD 6 a major expedition was launched against the menacing Maroboduus, king of the German Marcomanni, whose power centre lay north of the central Danube in Bohemia. This initiative was thwarted when Illyricum rebelled, a massive and widespread rebellion which was four years in the suppression. No sooner was it put down than the Varus disaster occurred in Germany (p. 143 above). Augustus changed from ambitious expansionism to cautious conservation of the status quo. Plans for conquest beyond Rhine and Danube were abandoned. The Illyrican command was split ; Dalmatia to the south and west, Pannonia to the north and east. Beyond Pannonia lay

Moesia, and between Moesia and Macedonia the kingdom of Thrace, still independent of direct Roman control, in reality a Roman puppet state, a situation which survived down to AD 46 when an uprising of the Thracian tribes led Claudius to annex the kingdom. The conquest of the Balkan area was thus complete. The kingdom of Noricum which lay west of Pannonia had been peaceably absorbed in the second decade BC. Roman control extended as far as the Danube from its source to its mouth.

While the general trend of the Augustan campaigns is known the positions of the military bases are, for the most part, no more than conjectural (fig. 8.23). After the suppression of the Illyrian rebellion seven legions remained in the Balkan area. As far as is known their bases all lay back in the heart of the region, not on its fringes, at important road and river junctions ready to deploy wherever they might be needed, be it against external or internal enemies. *Legio IX Hispana*, for example, probably lay at Sisak (Siscia) on the Sava, on the main east-west trunk route through the Balkans, while *VIII Augusta* was at Ptuj (Poetovio) where the so-called Amber Road (the great prehistoric Baltic-Italy trade route) crossed the Drava. The location of the third Pannonian legion is in doubt but a strong candidate, prior to its foundation as a veteran colony in AD 14, is Ljubljana (Emona) which controls entry to the pass over the Julian Alps, the major direct land link between the Balkans and Italy. The two Dalmatian legions both lay on the lateral road down the coastal side of the Dinaric Alps, in the territory of the hitherto troublesome Delmatae. The original stations of the two legions allocated to Moesia are not known. Possible sites lie at Nis (Naissus) and Skopje (Scupi) on the strategic overland link between Italy and the Aegean, the one commanding the valley of the Morava, the other on the upper Vardar in the Dardanian area important for its mines.

No further major campaigning took place in the Balkan area until the end of Nero's reign. Meanwhile the task of engineering a communications network was a priority and the army is early attested building roads. In Moesia the two legions undertook the construction of a towpath through the upper part of the Danube gorge, essential for the navigation of that part of the river. Some redeployment of the army took place during these generally peaceful years (fig. 8.23). A few units were moved from the interior to points where major routes crossed the Danube. Late under Tiberius or early in the reign of Claudius a legionary fortress was built at Petronell – Deutsch Alteburg (Carnuntum) where the Amber Road met the river. At much the same time an auxiliary unit was posted about 100 km (62 miles) to the south-east to Szöny (Brigetio) where a route led northwards up the

Vág valley into the territory of the Quadi, and another to Budapest (Aquincum) where a diagonal road across Pannonia meets the Danube at a major crossing point, which gives access to the west–east route across the north of the Great Hungarian Plain. To east and west of Pannonia, in Moesia and Noricum, the pattern recurs. It is under Claudius that legionary bases appear on the Danube in Moesia. Kostolac (Viminacium) was founded at the head of the route up the Morava, close by the Danube crossing at Palanka (Lederata), the western route north into Dacia. Gigen (Oescus) lay opposite the entrance to the Olt valley, and, 80 km (50 miles) to the east, Stuklen (Novae) was sited on a river crossing and at the exit of the Shipka pass over the Balkan mountains from Thrace which had, at this same time, been made into a Roman province. To the west, in Noricum, the bulk of the small occupying force still lay in the interior of the province, with only two sites, a mere 18 km (11 miles) apart, occupied on the river front, Linz (Lentia) and Enns-Lorch (Lauriacum), both on routes from the north, the latter at the terminus of the trans-Alpine road from the Adriatic via Virunum, the provincial capital, to the Danube.

The army thus lay poised at nodal points on the route network, concerned with both the maintenance of internal security and supervision of tribes beyond the provincial limits. Some troop movements in the northern area of Pannonia will have been connected with the downfall, in AD 50, of the Quadian king, Vannius, a Roman nominee to the kingdom of the Suebi. Tacitus records that Claudius, while declining to interfere directly in this dispute, ordered the governor of Pannonia ‘to station a legion with a picked body of auxiliaries on the bank of the Danube’ in order to protect the losers and deter the victorious barbarians lest they be tempted to invade the province. Vannius' forces included cavalry recruited from the Sarmatian Iazyges, a tribe of whom more will be heard. In AD 62 *legio V Macedonica* was moved to the east from its base at Oescus. Only two legions were now available for the defence of Moesia, with its 1,000 km (600 miles) of river frontier. The garrison of the Balkan area as a whole was a small one ; proportionally far more troops lay in the Rhineland at this time. It was the advent of serious troubles on the Danube in the Flavian period which brought about a reversal of this situation.

In the first half of the first century AD there moved into the region north of the Danube, east and west of the Dacian kingdom, the Sarmatians, nomadic Iranian horsemen driven westwards from the steppes of Kazakhstan by the Huns. They were a people who, in the words of the historian Florus, did not know the meaning of peace. They first appeared on the lower Danube late in Augustus' reign; by mid-century the Sarmatian

Roxolani were established to the east of the Dacian kingdom beyond the Danube delta, the Iazyges in the Great Hungarian Plain, sandwiched between Pannonia to the west and Dacia to the east, whence they had perhaps been moved with Roman connivance, to form a bulwark between the Roman province and the predatory Dacians, and to prevent any alliance between Dacia and the Germanic Quadi and Marcomanni. Soon after their arrival on the Danube the Sarmatians impinged upon the fortunes of the Roman provinces : the Iazyges first appear in a broadly pro-Roman stance, providing cavalry for the client king Vannius (p. 175 above). Some years later the Roxolani feature among the trans-Danubian peoples with whom the governor of Moesia, Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, came to terms, having, in the words of a laudatory inscription set up in his honour, ‘crushed a rising of the Sarmatians at its outset’. The extent of the threat at this time is not known, but in the winter of 67–68 the Roxolani struck in earnest, crossing the Danube and massacring two cohorts. The following year with the Empire embroiled in civil war and the Moesian legions departed to fight for the Flavian cause, the Dacians attacked. A temporary reprieve was effected by Mucianus, marching west with reinforcements for Vespasian. Late in 69 a new governor, Fonteius Agrippa, brought three legions to Moesia ; the one assigned to the Sarmatian front was insufficient to prevent renewed invasion and devastation in the spring of 70. The luckless governor was killed; his replacement, Rubrius Gallus, brought in another legion and succeeded in expelling the invader. As a result of the experiences of these years the military arrangements on the Danubian *limes* were reviewed:

Having brought the war to this conclusion the governor (Rubrius Gallus) took precautions for future security by stationing more numerous and stronger garrisons throughout the area, so as to make it impossible for the barbarians to cross the river again. (Josephus, *Bellum Iudaicum*, 7.94)

A line of forts was constructed along the Danube banks, not just on the Dacian and Sarmatian front but further west where Pannonia and Noricum faced the Quadi and Marcomanni (fig. 8.24). Fort spacing and siting was related to topography. In Noricum, for example, relatively few forts lay in the stretch between Passau and the Wachau; for much of this length the river flows in a narrow steep-sided valley. The area north of the river was heavily forested and sparsely populated. Further east, between the Wachau and the Wienerwald, the *limes* fronts the Tullnerfeld, thickly populated and

menaced by the Marcomanni, the most vulnerable sector of the Norican *limes*. Here five forts lay in a 50-km (31-mile) stretch. Topography too dictated that in the Danube gorge area in Moesia few forts could be accommodated on the steep approaches to the river; instead closer spaced fortlets provided the necessary troop accommodation.

It is probably at this time that the Danube watchtowers, illustrated on Trajan's Column and therefore certainly in existence by the beginning of the second century, make their first appearance. These early towers, timber or stone (the Column would

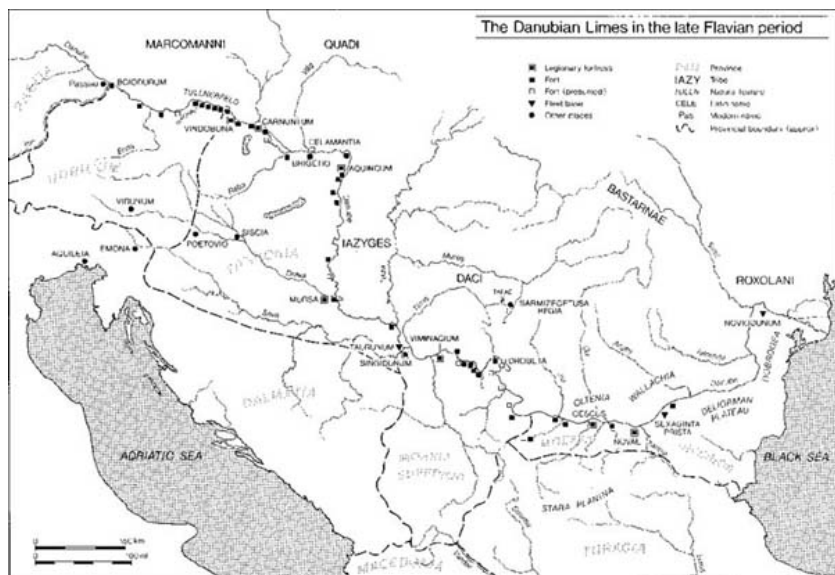


Figure 8.24 The Danubian *limes* in the late-Flavian period

appear to show stonework, [pl. 8.4](#)), have proved elusive on the ground. None has been found in the Moesian sector, and the first two have only recently been identified in northern Pannonia, just west of the Danube knee. Such examples as have been identified in Noricum appear to date to the second rather than the late first century.

The auxiliary establishment of Pannonia and Moesia increased substantially during the Flavian period, as the focus of military activity in the west swung away from the Rhine towards the Dacian-Sarmatian front. The Norican frontier, that much further west, remained quiet until the middle years of the second century. The two Danube fleets were reorganized, and it is perhaps then that new bases were built for the *classis Moesica* at Sexaginta Prisca (literally 'Sixty Ships') and at Noviodunum in

the northern Dobrogea, close to the Danube delta. No auxiliary forts yet lay this far east, for the land which lay south of the river, the Deliorman plateau (the name means 'wild wood') was an ill-watered heavily forested region which supported but a sparse population.

In AD 85, despite these new measures, crisis returned to the Danube. The Dacians, whose power had been in eclipse since the death of their great king Burebista in the mid-first century BC, were once again strong and reunited under another powerful ruler, Decebalus. The heartland of the Dacian kingdom lay within the mountain amphitheatre of the Carpathians, with their major hill-top citadels lying in the Transylvanian Alps, no great distance north of the Moesian frontier. In 85 they crossed the Danube, killing the governor of Moesia and destroying part of his army : a legion, *V Alaudae*, was lost. In the Dacian war that ensued and which brought the emperor himself to the area, Rome suffered a further major defeat when the praetorian prefect, Cornelius Fuscus, was killed. Eventually in 88 a Roman victory was achieved at Tapae on the western approaches to Dacia. Perhaps because trouble had broken out in the Rhineland with the revolt of Saturninus and renewed hostilities with the Chatti, remarkably lenient terms were given to the Dacian king. He received subsidies and retained his power, though nominally as a Roman client, while Domitian warred against his vassal states, the German Marcomanni and Quadi and the Sarmatian Iazyges, because they had failed to support him against Decebalus.

In the course of the Dacian war the Moesian command had been divided ; two legions now lay in each of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, the last remaining Dalmatian legion, *IV Flavia*, being brought into a new legionary base at Beograd (Singidunum). With the transfer of *XIII Gemina* from Ptuj (Poetovio) on the Drava crossing of the Amber Road, the whole of the Danubian legionary strength lay on, or very close to, the river ([fig. 8.24](#)). None remained in the interior. As a result of the Dacian and Sarmatian threats the Pannonian legionary establishment had doubled from two to four units. A legionary fortress replaced the earlier cavalry fort at Budapest (Aquincum), the gateway to the territory of the Iazyges, while *II Adiutrix*, transferred from Britain to take part in the Dacian war, was based in the extreme south-east of the province at Osijek (Mursa) on the Drava, some 20 km (12½ miles) from its confluence with the Danube and at a major road junction whence routes led west, north and southeast into Moesia. The work of constructing auxiliary forts along the river bank, begun under Vespasian, continued under Domitian and into the reign of Trajan; such military sites as remained in the interior were largely abandoned as the army moved up to the frontier. In addition to the bases on

the right bank, bridgehead fortifications were constructed on the left bank at several of the major crossing points, opposite Carnuntum and Aquincum, for example, and at Celamantia opposite Brigetio. Roman control will have extended well beyond the river itself, with patrols operating over the whole of the area north and east of the frontier line.

The treaty arrangement with Dacia, negotiated by Domitian, was rejected by Trajan. It is clear that from the outset he planned the absorption of the Dacian kingdom, and preparations for the campaign can be seen in the completion of the towpath through the Danube gorge. Access through the upper gorge had been achieved as early as the 30s, but it is only now that the road was extended through the steep and narrow defile of the Kazan in the lower gorge, a remarkable rock-cut road with a cantilevered timber superstructure whose execution is commemorated on an inscription, the *Tabula Traiana*, carved into the rock face in AD 100. The river link between Upper and Lower Moesia was completed by the digging of a 5 km (3 mile) long canal to by-pass the Iron Gate; an inscription set up in AD 101 records that Trajan 'having by-passed the river on account of the dangerous cataracts, has made safe the entire passage of the Danube' (Šašel, 1973; [fig. 8.25](#)). There now existed effective land and river links between the armies of the two provinces.

In the course of two campaigns, 101–2 and 105–6, Trajan defeated the Dacians, driving Decebalus to suicide, and took possession of his kingdom. The province of Dacia which he created comprised the territory which lay within the amphitheatre of the Carpathians, the region of the Banat bounded on the north by the river Mureş and on the west by the Tisza, and western Oltenia as far as the area of the river Jiu ([fig. 8.26](#)). Two legions were stationed here: *IV Flavia* lay on the western approach, first at Haşeg – later to become the *colonia* Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegethusa – and subsequently a little to the west along this same route at Reşiţa (Berzobis). The other legion, *XIII Gemina*, was stationed at Alba Iulia (Apulum) in the valley of the Mureş. Auxiliary units were disposed along the main routes into the province, that which led north and east from the Lederata crossing via Tibiscum to Ulpia Traiana, and on the route north from the Pontes-Drobeta crossing where Trajan had built his new bridge (the Bridge of Apol-lodorus), via the upper waters of the river Jiu. A third grouping of forts lay in the exposed north-west corner of the province where a gap in the mountain chain allowed easy access to and from the territory of the Iazyges. There was also a group of forts, briefly occupied, in the region of the Dacian citadels.

On the eastern flank of the new province the area of the Wallachian Plain

and southern Moldavia as far as the Siret, came under the control of the governor of Lower

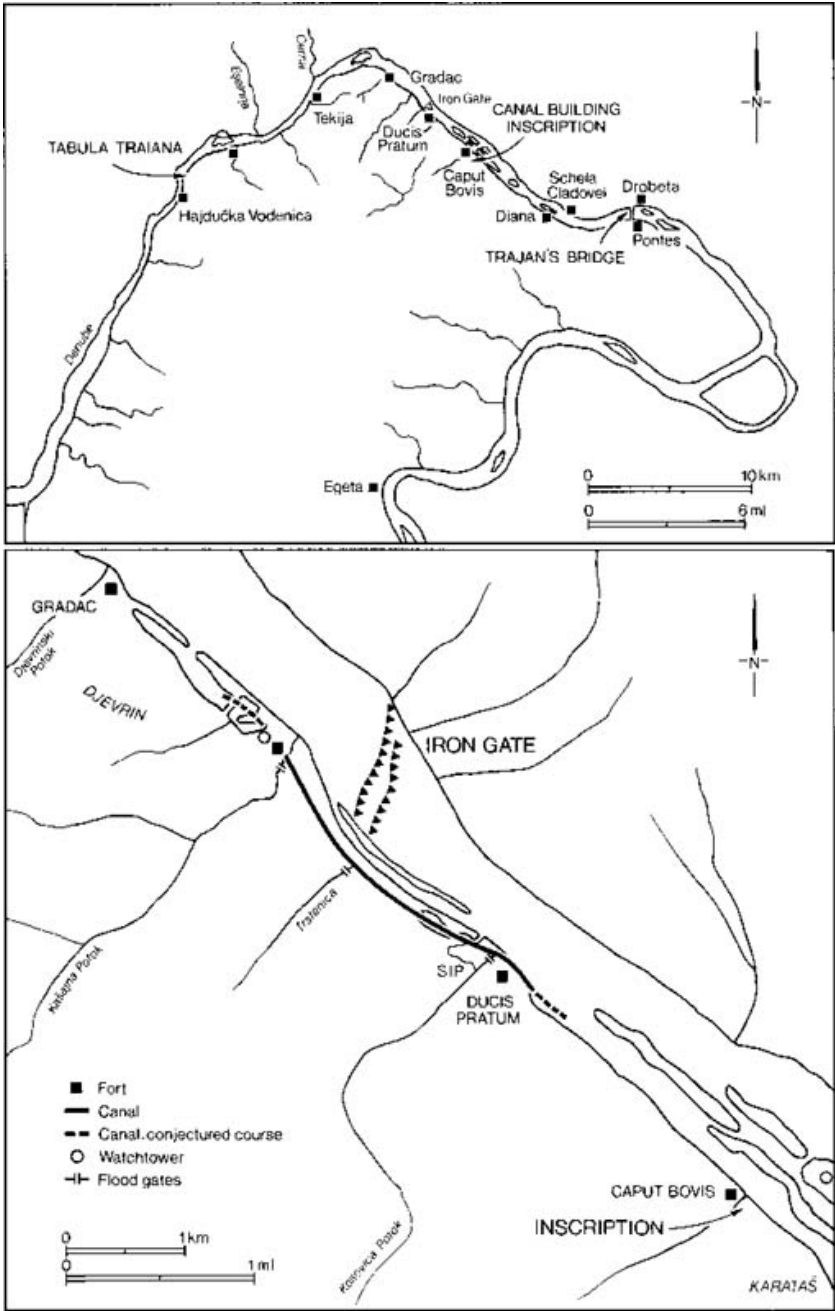


Figure 8.25 Trajan's canal at the Iron Gate

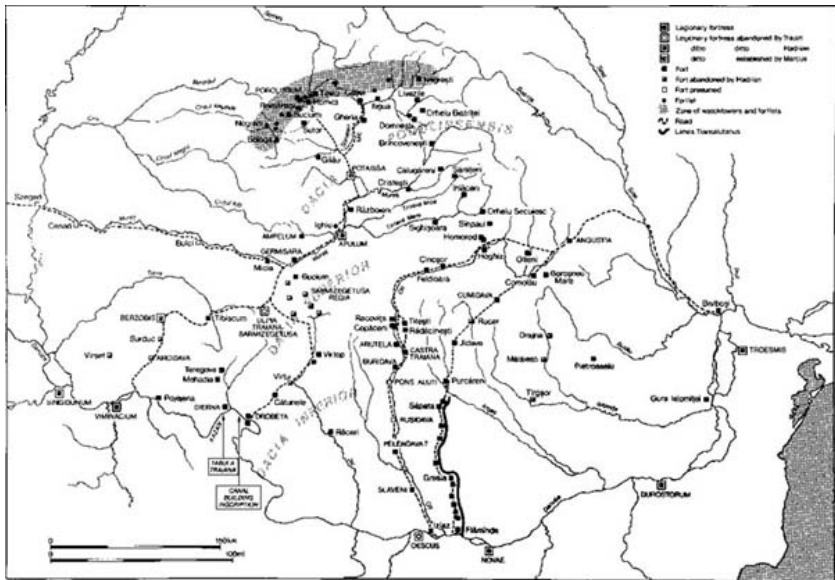


Figure 8.26 Dacia: military sites

Moesia, with units being stationed on the roads leading up to the mountain passes, in the valleys of the Olt, Ialomija and Siret. It is under Trajan that units were first stationed on the Danube itself east of the Yantra, the result perhaps of experience gained in the first Dacian War when Sarmatian Roxolani had invaded the province. Two new legionary bases were established, at Silistra (Durostorum) and at Iglîța (Troesmis) in the north-west corner of the Dobrogea, garrisoned by the legion from Oescus which now became a veteran colony. Further reorganization at this period involved the Pannonian command which was split into two, Pannonia Superior to the west with its three legions at Vindobona, Carnuntum and Brigetio, Pannonia Inferior in the east, with one legion at Aquincum and a substantial auxiliary garrison ranged along the Danube looking out over the Great Hungarian Plain.

The first governor of Pannonia Inferior, the future emperor Hadrian, had to deal with trouble from Sarmatians, presumably the Iazyges, and a decade later, almost immediately upon his accession to the imperial throne in 117, he launched a punitive campaign against them after they, in concert with the Roxolani, had invaded Roman territory, killing the governor of Dacia. The Roxolani complained that the subsidy due them from Rome (and presumably negotiated with Trajan in the wake of the Dacian wars) had

been reduced. The peace subsequently negotiated by Hadrian in 118 lasted for half a century. The government of Roman territory north of the Danube was totally reorganized. The province of Dacia was split into three separate commands. Dacia Superior, with its one legion at Apulum (*legio IV Flavia* had departed from the province) occupied the central regions : the position of its south-western frontier is uncertain, lying either on the river Tisza or further east in the region of the line from Lederata to Tibiscum or Dierna to Tibiscum. If the latter hypothesis is correct it means that the Banat no longer formed part of the province, and had presumably been handed over to the Iazyges, now in a treaty relationship with Rome. Two large forts at Micia and Tibiscum, each capable of holding more than a single auxiliary unit, controlled access to the province, one on the road along the valley of the Mureş, the other on the route from the south. North of the Mureş the mountains of Bihar afforded some protection. The north-western area became the province of Dacia Porolissensis which contained no legion but had a major concentration of auxiliary troops, notably at Porolis-sum whose two forts, Pomet and Citera, were together capable of holding a force equivalent in size to almost half a legion. This north-western *limes* guarded a gap in Dacia's natural defence, access via the valleys of Criş and Someş. Fieldwork still in progress is showing this to be the most complex of the Dacian frontier sectors (fig. 8.27); it is as yet incompletely known and therefore incompletely understood. Structural evidence indicates that it is of more than one build, but its development and dating are uncertain. There are several short, discontinuous sectors of linear barrier, part earthwork (bank and ditch), part stone. In the area of Porolissum the barrier runs for a distance of about 4 km (2½ miles), and for a stretch of 225 m (246 yd) is double, the two elements

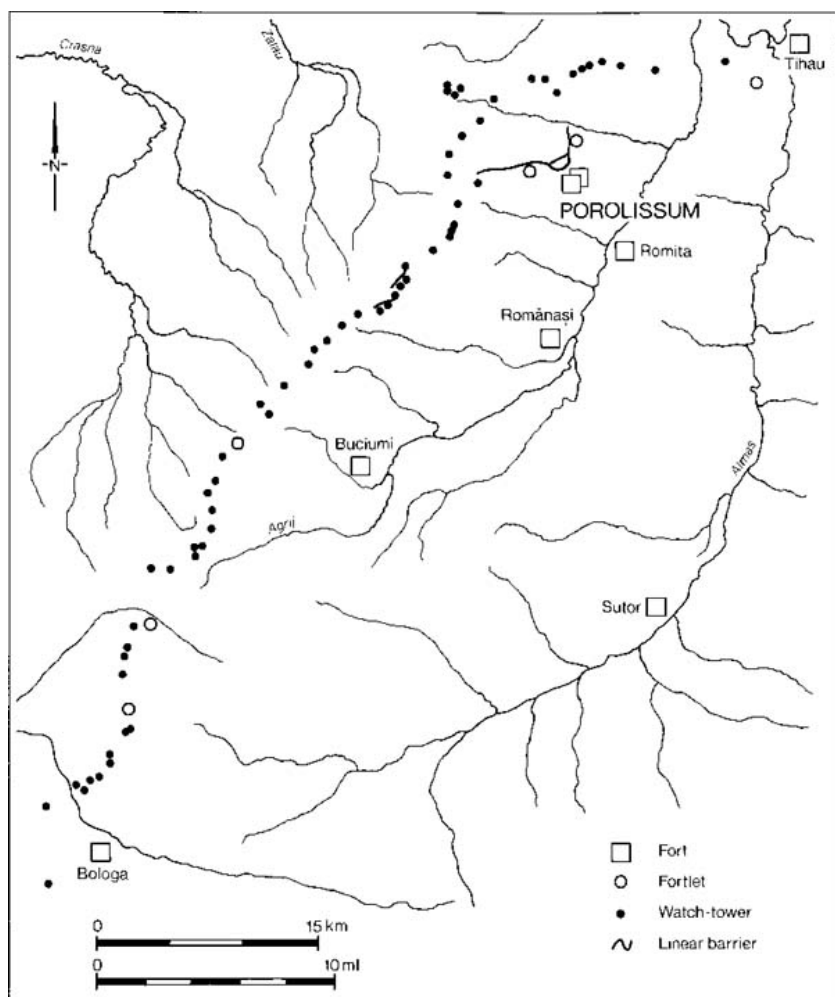


Figure 8.27 The *limes Porolissensis*

running about 18 m (19½ yd) apart (fig. 8.28). Attached to this barrier just east of the forts are two earth and timber fortlets, and two further fortlets lie to the west (fig. 8.29). Observation over this frontier area was maintained from a complex of stone-built towers, mostly square, some circular, sited at irregular intervals on high ground as dictated by local topography, which extends around the north-west and north sides of the province. This complex of installations is designed to control movement into the province via the main north-west gateway through the Meseș mountains. It indicates a continuing concern with the mobile Iazyges beyond, who, despite their client status, were not to be wholly trusted.

The third province, Dacia Inferior, lay to the south and east, between the Carpathians and the Danube. That part of southern Moldavia and the Wallachian Plain occupied by Trajan was evacuated by Roman troops, the result of the treaty arranged between Hadrian and the Roxolani. The eastern frontier lay to the east of the river Olt, troops being deployed in two north-south lines along the two roads which linked Moesia and Dacia ; one ran up the valley of the Olt from the Danube crossing at Izlaz by the colony and erstwhile fortress of Oescus to the Red Tower Pass through the Carpathians (the so-called *limes Alutanus*), the other an advanced line to the east from Flaminda north and east through the Bran Pass (the *limes Transalutanus*). Just in front of this road, on its eastern flank a linear earthwork was constructed, an earth and timber rampart, but with no ditch in front, with two building phases, the first showing signs of having been destroyed by fire. The bank itself is undated and the interpretation of it depends on an understanding of the role of the forts which lie in its vicinity. The once popular theory that the line of forts on the Olt represents the original Hadrianic frontier line which was replaced later in the second century by the so-called *limes Transalutanus*, an interpretation heavily influenced by the British frontier sequence, does not accord with the available, albeit meagre, evidence on the dating of the forts on the outer road. Further, the very fact that the outer, and eastern, bank of the Olt stands higher than the inner would have made it a very difficult frontier to control. It is more likely that the earthwork here marks the eastern boundary of the province of Dacia Inferior as instituted by Hadrian when he evacuated the military sites further east in the Wallachian Plain.

One effect of the occupation of Dacia was to transform the Danubian line, in the middle reaches of its course through Moesia, from an external to an internal frontier. The evidence on the point is not totally clear but such as there is suggests that this zone was not completely demilitarized, though there was some redeployment of troops. The legion was withdrawn from Oescus, for example, and transferred to the more vulnerable frontier sector near the Danube mouth. Some forts were needed to watch the major routes and river crossings from Moesia into Dacia.

Beyond the frontiers treaties were made with the peoples who bordered the Empire and peace maintained by diplomatic means for nearly half a century. Rome's power

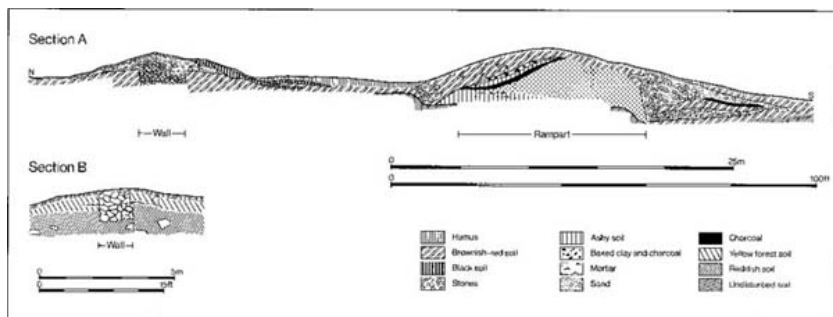


Figure 8.28 Sections across the *limes Porolissensis*: (a) double rampart to the west of Porolissum; (b) mortared stone wall (after Macrae et al.)

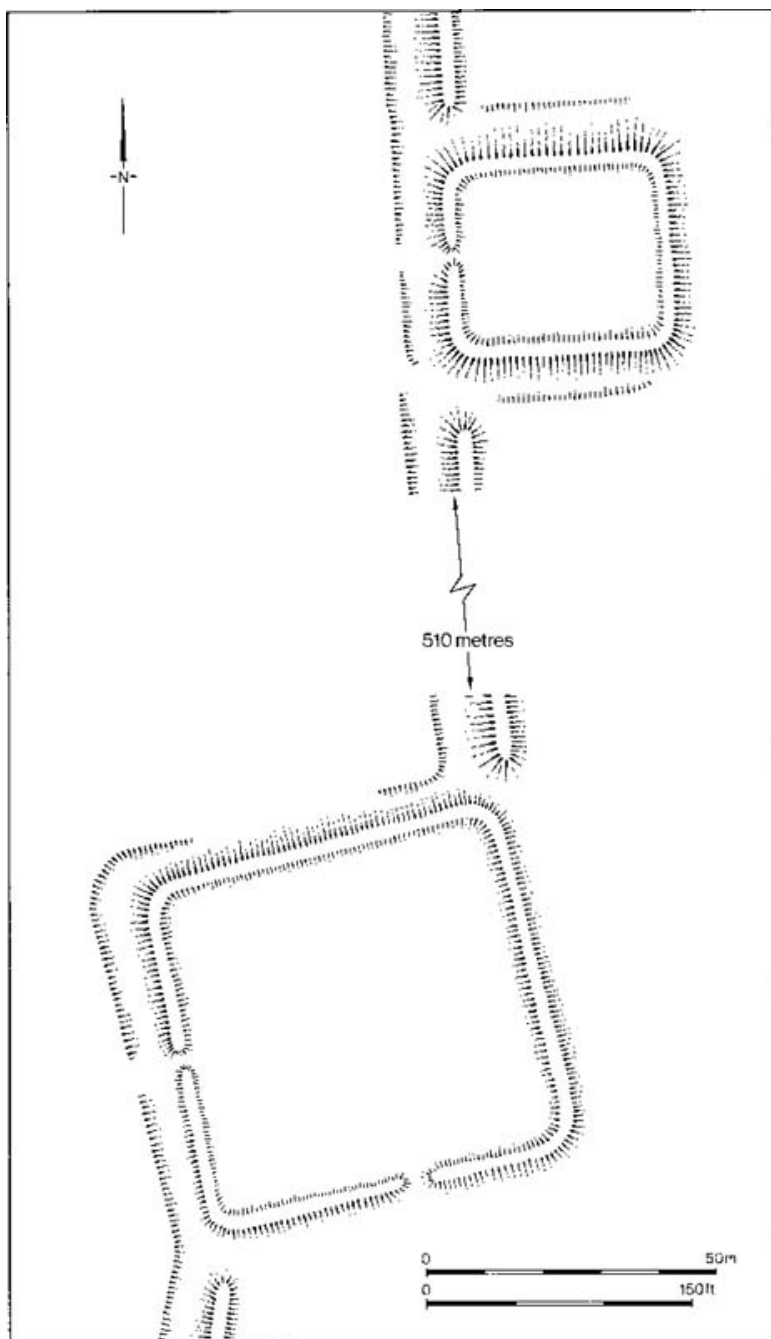


Figure 8.29 The fortlets at Brebi on the *limes Porolissensis* north-east of Porolissum (after Macrae et al.)

and influence extended well beyond the confines of her frontiers and she is found, for example, during the reign of Pius, intervening in the dynastic troubles of the Quadi. It was not until the 160s that serious trouble resumed, involving the area of the middle Danube, the Germanic Quadi and Marcomanni as well as the Sarmatian Iazyges. In 166 the Germans attacked and crossed the frontier, destroying many forts and civil settlements. In a renewed onslaught in 170–1 against the frontiers of Pannonia and Noricum the enemy penetrated southwards across the Alps and into northern Italy. It was some years before they were finally expelled from the Empire. During the course of and in the aftermath of these troubles, the military arrangements on the middle Danube were reviewed. In the early 170s, in the wake of the barbarian penetration into Italy, *legio II Italica* was stationed at Ločica in south-east Noricum, guarding the route from Pannonia into Italy over the Julian Alps. On conclusion of the hostilities the unit moved forward to the frontier line, first to Albing and very soon thereafter to the adjacent site of Lauriacum, a critical frontier crossing. Another legion, *III Italica*, was posted to Regensburg in Raetia (p. 164 above). Dacia now acquired a second legion, *V Macedonica* at Turda (Potaissa) in Dacia Porolissensis, stationed within easy reach of the vulnerable north-west frontier sector. Terms were once again imposed upon the peoples beyond the frontiers, limiting their access to the Danube, establishing a neutral zone along the frontier and stipulating conditions under which they might assemble and trade. Once again diplomacy was preferred to outright conquest. The seemingly logical solution of incorporating the Sarmatian Iazyges into the Empire, thereby considerably shortening the length of frontier which had to be controlled, was eschewed in favour of indirect control by treaty. The Sarmatians continued to be all but surrounded by Roman troops, hedged in by Roman restrictions, but to remain independent kingdoms against whom Rome had to be constantly on the alert.

In lower Pannonia a series of inscriptions attests the construction in AD 184 of a line of watchtowers and garrisons along the Danube front designed to prevent 'the secret infiltration of the province by brigands'. Some new units of mounted archers, equipped to deal with the threat posed by the highly mobile Sarmatians, were raised. The rebuilding of forts and fortresses in stone, begun earlier in the century, continued, but in all its essentials the frontier arrangements did not change until change was forced upon it by the disastrous invasions of the third century. One significant development which then occurred was the establishment of an overall military command for the Danubian region, with its base at Sirmium. This

post was created in 247 or 248 by Philippus after he had personally participated in war on the Danube, against the Carpi. In the 240s the Gothic incursions across the lower Danube began, which led to the destruction of forts and fortresses and to the devastation of Thrace and lower Moesia, and which culminated in the death of the emperor Trajan Decius and his son in 251 at Abritus. The Gothic attacks were renewed in 267–270. The middle and upper Danube meanwhile suffered from invasions by Marcomanni, Quadi and Sarmatae (25 8– 60). The buffer zone beyond the Danube no longer cushioned the provinces from attack, for Rome's clients, unable to resist the pressure from hostile tribes beyond, Goths, Gepids, Vandals and Carpi, were precipitated into the empire. Further west, the Norican frontier, particularly its exposed north-west corner, had been under sporadic attack from the Alamanni throughout the third century. The north of the province suffered periodic devastation. In 270, when the Alamanni and Juthungi invaded through Raetia into Italy, Noricum, on the eastern flank of the attack, did not escape unscathed, and on this occasion the destruction spread well to the south, a region which, because of its natural Alpine defences, generally suffered much less severely than the north. The following year, AD 271, Dacia was abandoned, the first entire established province to be evacuated in the face of enemy pressure. The Danube became once again the frontier. Dacia's two legions were transferred to the south bank of the river where the new province of Dacia Ripensis was carved out of what had been Moesian territory. There is little evidence for immediate reorganization of the frontier sites, but a couple of decades later, during the Tetrarchy, a complete overhaul of the imperial defences was undertaken ([fig. 8.30](#)). In addition to the administrative reforms which included major provincial reorganization (eight separate provinces now fronted the Danube), the division of civil and military responsibility and the creation of separate frontier commands ([Part 3, Chapter 7](#)), Diocletian instituted a massive programme of building on the frontiers. Existing forts were remodelled in the new overtly defensive architectural styles, with projecting towers and few, narrow and heavily guarded gateways, and new forts, fortlets and towers were added, thickening up the cordon of defence. Bridgehead forts were constructed, or reconstructed, on the left bank. Drobeta, for example, originally built as a Trajanic bridgehead at the northern end of his new Danube bridge, was redesigned and refortified; its gateways were blocked and bastions added. It lay north of the Danube gorge, an area which, with Dacia gone, had once again become a frontier sector. Numerous close-spaced posts were built along this stretch (about 90 in 30 km or 19 miles), mostly small in size because of the restrictions

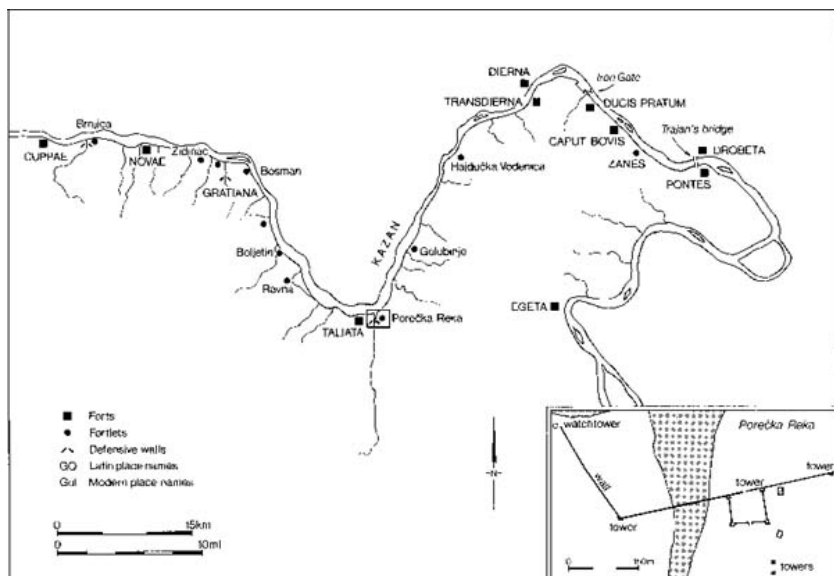


Figure 8.31 Detail of the late-Roman defensive wall at Porečka Reka

the overall command of the *comes Italiae*, whose insignia of office as illustrated in the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows a fortified city at the foot of mountains guarded by barrier walls (pl. 8.5).

The programme of frontier refortification begun during the Tetrarchy, was continued through the reigns of Constantine and his successor. Their work included the provision of outer earthworks, constructed beyond the Danube, in an attempt to relieve pressure on the frontier itself. One of these boundary earthworks, the *Brazda lui Novae du Nord*, runs for 300 km (190 miles) north of the Danube (but south of the Carpathians), through Oltenia into Wallachia (fig. 8.30). At the time of its construction, perhaps after the Gothic wars of the 330s, a number of military posts were in occupation in this area north of the Danube and their troops will presumably have had responsibility for enforcing this outer controlled zone. Another of these zones was created around the area of the Great Hungarian Plain, the homeland of the Sarmatians who were under great pressure from the Goths and Gepids beyond; indeed in 322 the Sarmatians had fled west across the Danube in order to escape the depredations of the enemy in their rear. In order to afford some protection to the Sarmatians the Devil's Dyke was constructed, a series of earthen ramparts running eastwards from the Danube knee then turning

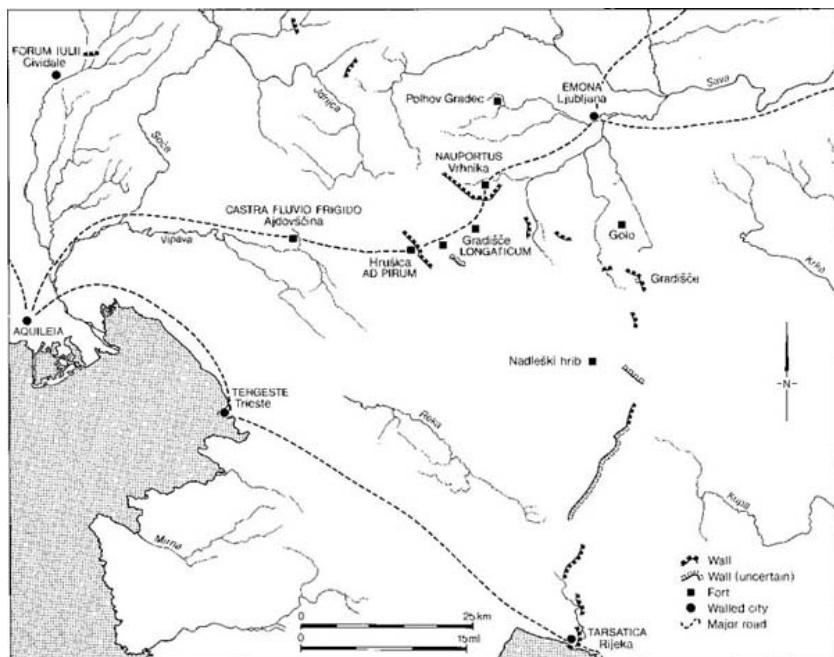


Figure 8.32 The *claustra Alpium Iuliarum*

south to rejoin the river by the fortress of Viminacium (fig. 8.30). A new fort, Visegrad, was constructed on the heights overlooking the Danube bend. In practice the Sarmatian problem remained and by the middle of the century some were being allowed to settle in the Empire.

A final period of fortification of the Norican and Pannonian *limites* took place under Valentinian I. Further watchtowers were set up in vulnerable sectors, around Brigetio where the Vág valley led straight to the frontier and on the Danube knee by the junction of the *limes* and the Devil's Dyke. Another new fort was established just west of the bend of the river, and a military post set up in Sarmatian territory 60 km (37 miles) beyond the Danube on the northern stretch of the earth wall, at Hatvan Gombospusztá. In the Moesian provinces inscriptions record the construction of fortifications following a victory by Valens over the Goths in 369. The victory was short-lived. In the 370s the Goths, driven by the Hunnic peoples who had appeared in the steppes north of the Danube delta, sought again to enter the Empire, crossed the Danube and thrust south through Thrace in the direction of Constantinople. Valens was killed in 378 at the battle of Adrianople. The Goths dispersed through the Danube provinces where some settled as federates in Pannonia and in what had been Lower Moesia north of the Stara Planina. Their role as federates was to help repel

further enemies from without, but their depredations were to turn them into enemies within.

The frontier of Pannonia did not long survive. By the end of the century many forts had been abandoned: some were reduced in size, watchtowers were no longer manned. The army ceased to be paid: coin ceased to circulate. In 395 the Pannonian Danube was crossed by Goths and Alans. Many of the inhabitants of the frontier provinces fled south to the relative security of Dalmatia or further, into Italy. Such life as remained on the middle Danubian frontier was finally extinguished by the Huns in 433.

To the west, Noricum lost a substantial part of its defending garrison when Gratian took it east, never to return, in 378. After the end of the century the pay of those that remained ceased to arrive regularly. The reduced garrison was totally unable to cope with the regular raids which came from beyond the frontiers, westwards from Pannonia and eastwards from the Vindelician Plain. By the time St Severin arrived in *c.* 460 and rallied a temporary resistance movement, there was no regular army to speak of. In the late 470s the western flank of the *limes* was lost, in 488 the whole of northern Noricum was abandoned. The south of the province, protected by the Alps, survived longer, its population fleeing to mountain refuges when the barbarians swept through, emerging once more when danger was past. It survived as a Roman enclave in a seething sea of barbarity, a province without a frontier.

To the east, the history of the Lower Moesian frontier may be traced well into the Byzantine era, for its proximity to Constantinople ensured that it received imperial attention. First it was battered by the Huns. In 447, in an onslaught led by Attila, the frontier forts were sacked, the Balkans devastated. The defences were restored, the raids continued unrelentingly. The Huns were followed in the sixth century by the Slavs, the Bulgars and then the Avars. Constantinople survived constant onslaught from the Balkan lands by the strength of its own defences; despite repeated attempts at refortification the frontiers themselves had long since ceased to keep the enemy at bay.



8.1 Aerial view of the Lorenzberg



8.2 View along the *limes* in the Taunus region of Upper Germany, showing the bank and ditch



8.3 The Danube at the Kazan Gorge



8.4 Trajan's column: towers on the bank of the Danube



8.5 The insignia of the *comes Italiae* from the *Notitia Dignitatum*

· BRITAIN ·

David J. Breeze

The successful landing of a force of four legions with support troops, probably 40,000 men in all, on the south coast of England in AD 43 marked the start of the conquest of Britain. There is no surviving Roman statement detailing the long-term intentions of the expedition, though the order given by Claudius to the governor Aulus Plautius, to conquer ‘the rest’, coupled with the general expansionism of the Empire at the time, strongly suggest that the aim was to subdue the whole island. The Romans certainly knew Britain to be an island, and that Ireland lay to one side; the invasion of Ireland was even considered at one point. It was to be forty years before Roman arms reached their greatest extent in Britain ([fig. 9.1](#)) but the famous victory at Mons Graupius in 83 or 84 was almost immediately followed by retrenchment and the abandonment of some territory. Ironically, it was during the campaigns which led to Mons Graupius that the first suggestion that the Romans might stop short of the conquest of the whole island appears.

The conquest of Britain during the forty years from 43 was not a smooth process. Much depended on the interest or involvement of the emperor. But throughout this period no frontiers were established in Britain. The army's purpose was to control the newly-conquered tribes and to protect them from external aggression. The province (and other friendly tribes) was guarded, not by the creation of an elaborate series of frontier works, which in any case were not part of the army's repertoire at the time, but by the strategic location of the main vehicles of defence, the legions. One legion was at first situated at Colchester, capital of the newly-conquered main enemy, while the other three were carefully placed for attack and defence in

the frontier zone. The position of the auxiliary regiments is uncertain: it is not clear whether they were grouped around the legions, which had been the norm elsewhere to date, dispersed across the province, or placed near to the provincial boundary, as was to become the pattern in later years. In any case their forts would be little more than winter quarters, probably fairly lightly built structures of limited life occupied for only a winter or two, and often placed where supplies could be readily assured. In time, a road network was created linking these military stations and facilitating the movement of troops. It has been suggested that the Fosse Way, the road running south-west to north-east through the English Midlands, served as a frontier to the province (first made by Collingwood, 1924). However, this road was merely one part of the network established by the army and it had no special military significance beyond providing a line of communication along the frontier zone.

The provincial boundary presumably lay along the borders of the relevant frontier tribes, though it cannot be compared to that existing between two sovereign countries today: forts might be established by the Romans beyond the frontier, in the territory of either friendly or hostile tribes, if advantageous to them. As the boundary moved forward, and new tribes were taken into the province, so the army moved forward, abandoning its forts in the territory of pacified tribes and establishing new bases to protect and control the newly-conquered peoples. A major shift in the military dispositions occurred in the 70s and 80s when Wales and northern Britain up to the Scottish Highland massif were incorporated into the province. The legions were advanced to new strategic positions: Caerleon in south Wales, Chester and York. In Wales and north Britain lay a network of auxiliary forts, usually ranging in size from 1.2 to 2.4 ha (3 to 6 acres), placed about a day's march apart – 22 to 32 km (14 to 20 miles) – and connected by roads (Nash-Williams, 1969; Breeze and Dobson, 1985). This was not a rigid pattern for it was varied to suit local conditions. It was also essentially a winter pattern for in the summer the army would be on campaign (fig. 9.1).

It was during the advance north in the governorship of Agricola from 77 or 78 to 83, 84 or 85 that there is the first suggestion that the Roman army might stop short of the conquest of the whole island. In discussing the events of Agricola's fourth season (80 or 81) Tacitus, the governor's biographer and son-in-law, remarks that 'if the courage of the army and the glory of the Roman name had allowed it, an end might have been found within Britain' and the Forth–Clyde isthmus was protected by garrisons. As it happened, this line was not to be held long, for two years later Agricola

pushed northwards towards his victory over the Caledonians at Mons Graupius.

Agricola's Forth–Clyde frontier – it presumably merits use of that term – remains the most shadowy of all the Roman frontiers in Britain. One fort on the isthmus, Camelon overlooking the Forth, had probably already been established before the decision to garrison this neck of land (Maxfield, 1981). Forty-eight kilometres (30 miles) to the west the fort at Barochan sits on the plateau above the southern bank of the Clyde: the date of its foundation within the Flavian period is not known. In between only one certain Flavian fort is known, the small fort or fortlet at Mollins, though other military installations have been postulated on the basis of the discovery of coins and



Figure 9.1 Military dispositions in Britain under Agricola

other artefacts of the right date. The nature of Agricola's frontier dispositions, fragmentary, unfinished and of brief duration as they might have been, remains uncertain.

If the establishment of garrisons on the Forth–Clyde isthmus marks a change in policy, then the northward advance resumed two years later reflects a return to the aims of earlier years, the conquest of the whole island: these changes in policy may reflect changes in emperors (Dobson, 1981, 7–8). It seems probable that Agricola considered that he had achieved that aim at Mons Graupius where he defeated the main enemy in northern Scotland (fig. 9.1). However, events elsewhere prevented his successor from following up that victory and securing the Roman grip on the north. Whatever intention there might have been to occupy the Highlands was first abandoned, then the outermost forts of the northern dispositions, then all forts beyond the Forth, and finally all forts north of the Tyne–Solway isthmus (Breeze and Dobson, 1976, 128–34).

The rapid changes of policy at this time, combined with our uncertainty of Roman intentions and the fragmentary state of the archaeological record, now render the events of these years and the reasons behind the establishment of certain forts difficult to comprehend. Nowhere is the problem more acute than in trying to determine the purpose of the forts constructed along the edge of the Highlands soon after Mons Graupius.

These forts run in a line from the Clyde nearly to the North Sea, from Barochan to Stracathro a little to the north-west of the Montrose Basin. Each fort effectively controls a route into, or out of, the Highlands. It has been suggested that their aim was to prevent the tribes of the Highlands using these glens to attack the Roman province (Richmond, 1939, 152; Frere, 1981, 91) and that they were the bases for further advance (Mann, 1968, 307–8). It is impossible now to be sure which interpretation is correct. However, the forts cannot be taken in isolation for also in eastern Scotland was constructed the legionary fortress at Inchtuthil (Pitts and St Joseph, 1985). This fortress in fact lies very far north, with only two known forts beyond it. But again difficulties of interpretation crowd in: was the legion in the front line, as were many such units in the first century, or was it brought up north to be the base for further conquests, becoming, in time, the support for troops further north and west? Again it is not possible to answer this question, though the position of the fortress on the north bank of the river Tay may point to an offensive rather than a supportive role.

Inchtuthil had a very short life, being abandoned unfinished in 86 or soon after. At the same time, it seems probable that the forts to the north and also those along the edge of the Highlands were abandoned, leaving the northernmost forts those along the road to the Tay. Along this road, between Ardoch and the river, a number of timber towers have been recognized and it seems probable that they date to this time (Robertson,

1974, 28; Breeze and Dobson, 1976, 129–31).

Fifteen towers have been found to date (fig. 9.2). Those between the fort at Ardoch (pl. 9.8) and the fortlet at Kaims Castle were regularly spaced at intervals of 900 m (1,000

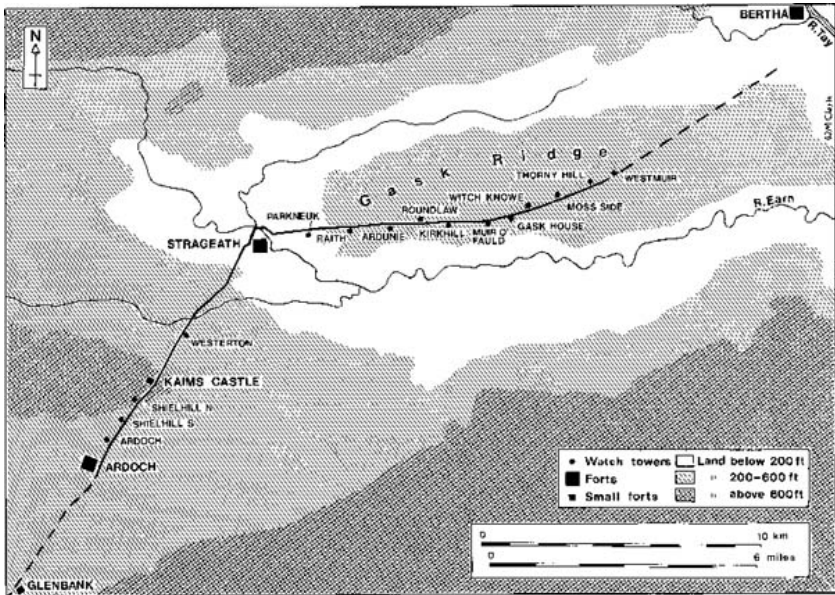


Figure 9.2 The Gask Ridge frontier arrangements

yards), but elsewhere the distance between each post varies between 0.8 to 1.6 km (1/2 to 1 mile). Except where there are obvious gaps all the towers are intervisible. Each station consisted of a twelve foot square timber tower formed of four large posts linked by walls of wattle-and-daub and surrounded by a bank and one or two ditches (fig. 9.3). A causeway led across the ditch towards the road. The fortlet at Kaims Castle, 4.8 km (3 miles) north of Ardoch, was complemented in 1983 by the discovery of a second fortlet an equivalent distance to the south at Glenbank; neither are dated but their relative positions suggest that both probably formed part of the same system as the towers.

The towers are too close together to have been used for signalling. Rather, their spacing suggests that they were elevated observation platforms enabling the soldiers stationed there to keep better watch on the cleared strip of ground between the posts and ensure that no unauthorized person entered the province. Strict regulations governed access to a Roman province: people from beyond the Empire normally could only enter if they were unarmed and they were then permitted to proceed to recognized

market places, but only under military escort. Also customs duties were chargeable, either at the frontier or at the market. Presumably the purpose of the towers was to ensure that these regulations were enforced while helping to keep in check small-scale

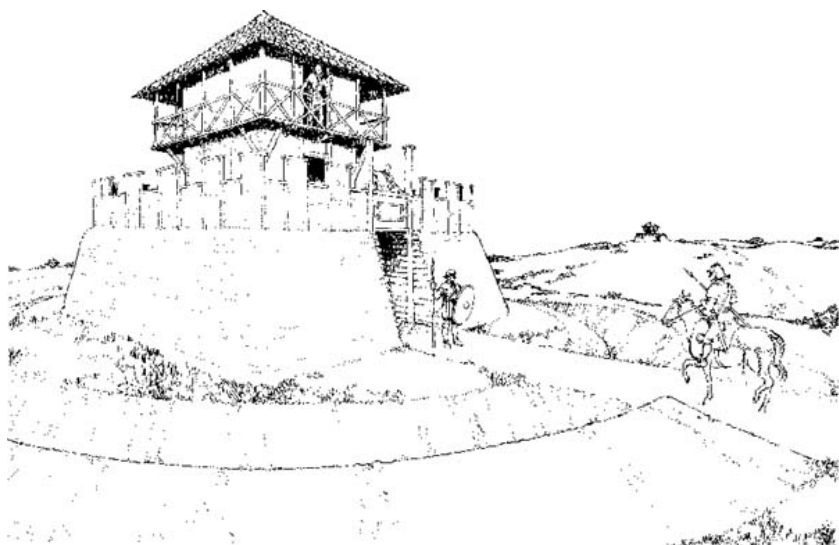


Figure 9.3 Reconstruction drawing of a Gask Ridge watchtower (*M. J. Moore*)

frontier raiding and brigandage. Together with the contemporary watchtowers in Germany (p. 153 above) they mark the first step to establish patrolled and guarded frontiers.

The exact date of construction of the Gask frontier watchtowers is not known. Two have produced late first-century pottery, but within that period further refinement of date has to be on historical and logical grounds. It seems unlikely that the towers would have been constructed in the years of advance before Mons Graupius, while their position, to the south of Inchtuthil, suggests that they were not contemporary with the legionary fortress. A date between the abandonment of the fortress in or soon after 86 and the withdrawal from all forts north of the Forth–Clyde isthmus in about 90 would seem most appropriate. In that case the Gask frontier formed one of the temporary positions held between Mons Graupius and the establishment of the Tyne–Solway line in the early second century.

The reasons for the progressive withdrawal from the forts north of the Tyne–Solway isthmus are not clear, and may have been varied. The transfer of a legion from Britain to the continent in or soon after 86 was the occasion for the abandonment of the fortress at Inchtuthil and presumably

simultaneously the other forts along the edge of the Highlands; the legion may have taken some auxiliary regiments with it to the Danube (Birley, 1953, 21). It has been suggested that the final stage in the move south, to the Tyne-Solway line, was in the face of pressure from the northern barbarians (Frere, 1978, 143–4), and certainly at least two forts were damaged by fire at this time (Corbridge and Newstead). However, renewed campaigning on the Danube, in this case Trajan's Dacian wars, may have led to the transfer of further auxiliary units from Britain to the continent, and thus the need to abandon some forts on the frontier (cf. Manning, 1972, 243–6 for the suggestion that Newstead was abandoned peacefully). Whatever the cause, the northernmost forts of the province lay across the Tyne–Solway isthmus, probably by about 105 or soon after.

This line had never previously formed the frontier of the province, though it roughly coincided with the northern boundary of a major tribe, the Brigantes, which had been in treaty relationship with Rome before its incorporation into the province. In the valleys of the Tyne to the east and the Eden to the west, where the roads north crossed the rivers, important forts had been established in the late first century, almost certainly by Agricola. These forts, Corbridge and Carlisle, were linked by a road, the Stanegate, and the distance between them was broken by intermediate stations. During the first twenty years of the second century this line was gradually strengthened by the construction of new forts, fortlets and watchtowers, until in the 120s all were replaced by the construction of a new form of frontier control, a linear barrier. The details of the process are unclear, the scale of the operations uncertain and the order of works obscure, but some points may be made (cf. Breeze and Dobson, 1978, 20–6). The line between Corbridge and Carlisle seems to have been strengthened by the construction of at least one new fort and two fortlets or small forts: it seems unlikely that these two sites stood alone, but other similar installations have yet to be found. West of Carlisle a fort already existed at Kirkbride, but it seems probable that it was only then that a fort was built east of Corbridge: a fort, apparently of two phases, has been discovered from the air on the south bank of the Tyne at Washing Well, Whickham, but it has not been excavated and is therefore not dated (McCord and Jobey, 1971, 120).

It may have been as late as the early years of Hadrian that other developments took place on the isthmus. Some isolated watchtowers appear to date to this time (Breeze, 1982, 69), while the most interesting innovations took place west of Carlisle. Here, in addition to timber watchtowers, lines of ditches have been traced and it has been suggested

that their purpose was to help control the fording points over the Solway (Jones, 1980; 1982, 285), though a Roman date for their excavation has yet to be proved. One tower was succeeded by a fort at Burgh-by-Sands but it seems possible that this belongs to the first phase of the Wall.

The construction of the small forts and towers on the Tyne–Solway isthmus was presumably to aid frontier control, but there seems to have been no attempt to emulate the Gask frontier by the erection of closely-spaced towers. Whatever success the ‘Stanegate frontier’ may have had at frontier control, the most effective aid to control, short of the conquest of the whole island, was the erection of a linear barrier. It may have been that consideration, coupled with the intention to call a halt to the expansion of the empire, which led Hadrian to order the building of a wall to separate the barbarians and the Romans (*Historia Augusta, Life of Hadrian* 11, 2).

Hadrian's Wall (pl. 9.3; fig. 9.4) was planned to run from sea to sea, from Newcastle, beside a new bridge over the Tyne, to Bowness on the Solway (Breeze and Dobson, 1978; Daniels, 1978). The eastern 45 Roman miles were built of stone and the western 31 miles of turf. The reason for this difference in treatment is not known, though it may be noted that the construction of a frontier wall in mortared stone is more unusual than building in turf. It may be that Hadrian, a great builder, simply conceived of his wall on a massive scale and ordered its construction in durable stone wherever possible.

The Wall was not an impenetrable barrier and at intervals of one Roman mile single portal gateways, protected by a small fortlet or milecastle (pl. 9.1; fig. 9.5), were provided. In between each milecastle were two watchtowers or turrets (pl. 9.2; fig. 9.5) and regularity of spacing of towers was ensured by the placing of a tower over the north gate of each milecastle. The towers were stone all the way along the Wall, whether it was built of stone or turf, but the milecastles were of stone on the stone wall and turf and timber on the turf wall. Small barrack-blocks were provided at the milecastles but it is not known whether the soldiers stationed there were also charged with the maintenance of watch at the adjacent turrets. Nor is it known where the soldiers on the Wall came from: were they a separate force, or were they drawn from auxiliary units in the area? On balance the latter seems to be the most likely.

The system of milecastles and turrets continued down the Cumbrian coast for at least 42 km (26 miles) beyond the end of the Wall at Bowness, revealing a preoccupation with raiding and unauthorized access from across the Solway estuary (Bellhouse, 1970, 40–7). Recent work has demonstrated that this was not a simple line of milefortlets and towers. The complication

is the discovery of ditches (each usually recut at least twice) and a palisade in the first 13 km (8 miles) west of Bowness (Jones, 1982). In one place two parallel ditches have been found, then a single ditch a little further on, and then one ditch and a palisade. There a road also appears, while the palisade was of two phases: a third phase was represented by a stone tower, possibly preceded by one of timber, which overlay the ditch. Where the evidence survives, the milefortlets sit between the ditches, front and rear gates allowing movement across the linear features (Jones, 1976; Bellhouse, 1981). These slight remains – ditches and palisades – have come to light through aerial photography followed by selective excavation. Dating evidence is minimal, though they appear to belong to the very earliest phases of Hadrian's Wall, being modified and then abandoned apparently still within Hadrian's reign (Jones, 1976, 242–3). It is to be hoped that further reconnaissance and excavation will reveal more details concerning their date and development.

In the first plan for Hadrian's Wall the army units remained behind the Wall on the Stanegate and elsewhere in northern England, thus emphasizing that the soldiers in the milecastles and turrets on the Wall served a different function from those in the

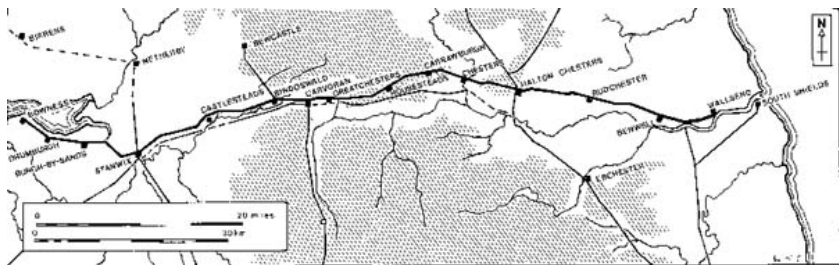


Figure 9.4 Hadrian's Wall

forts of the frontier area. The former were concerned with frontier control, including the supervision of movement across the frontier, the prevention of petty raiding and the like, while the army units were charged with the defence of the province. The existence of the Wall would hinder raiding and brigandage but it could not, and did not, stop a major invasion: that could only be done by the concerted action of the regiments of the north combining together and moving out to meet the enemy in the field. Here the army was paramount: the Roman army was not equipped to fight defensively and did not use Hadrian's Wall as a medieval castle wall. The very size of Hadrian's Wall – the stone wall was 10 Roman feet wide and the turf wall 20 Roman feet wide at its base, but perhaps only 6 feet wide at

the top – has led to the general supposition that the wall top was patrolled. There is no evidence for this however, and indeed it would have been impossible to patrol the top of those frontiers where the barrier was merely a timber fence (p. 157 above).

The first scheme for Hadrian's Wall was never completed. During building work a major change in plan took place; it was decided to abandon the forts immediately behind the Wall and construct new forts on the Wall itself. Many of the soldiers building the Wall were moved on to fort building, but some remained behind to complete the construction of the milecastles, turrets and the Wall itself. After some of this work had been done it was decided to reduce the thickness of the stone wall from the initial 10 Roman feet to 8 feet or less.

The decision to move the forts on to the Wall was not taken lightly for it involved the abandonment of sixteen forts, some only recently built or rebuilt, and the construction of an equal number of new stations. Why was it taken? In the initial plan the Wall lay between the army units and the enemy and it seems probable that the barrier obstructed flexible troop movements. While the provision of gates at mile intervals was generous for civilian traffic it was restrictive for the army with only one single-portal gate at each crossing point. Thus when the forts were moved they were actually built astride the Wall with three main gates north of the Wall, providing the equivalent of six single-portal gates, while the sole southern gate was supported by the addition of two single-

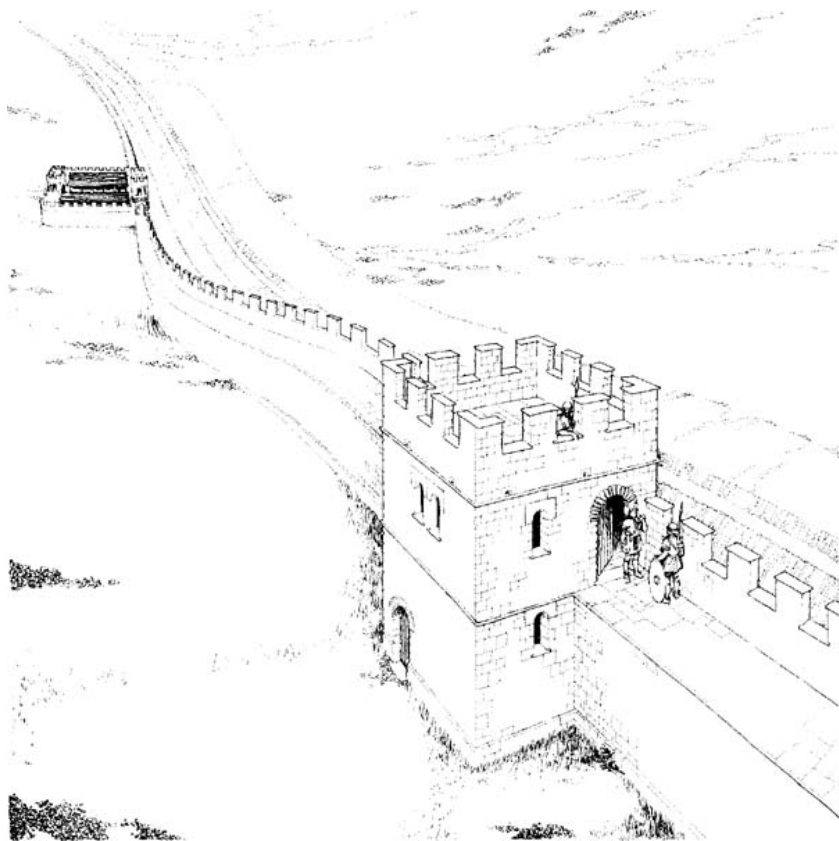


Figure 9.5 Reconstruction drawing of a turret and milecastle on Hadrian's Wall (M. J. Moore)

portal gates at the ends of the *via quintana*. In this way freedom of movement was provided: indeed there appears to have been overprovision, for many gates north of the Wall show little sign of use while the later forts on the Wall were built wholly south of the barrier, though still attached to it.

The construction of the forts on the Wall was accompanied by the digging of a new earthwork, known since the time of the Venerable Bede as the Vallum (pl. 9.3). This earthwork extended the whole length of the Wall and consisted of a central ditch with a mound set back on either side. The Vallum offered no advantage to either side and its main purpose seems to have been to mark the southern limit of the military zone: it was the Roman equivalent of barbed wire ! Gaps through the Vallum were provided, but only at forts and presumably also at the main roads north through the Wall. Thus the number of crossing points through the military zone was reduced

from an original seventy-eight or thereabouts to about sixteen. This strengthened military control, though the reason for this change in plan is not certain. It could be that the soldiers guarding the milecastles had been too lax, and it was decided to increase supervision by placing the crossing points under the immediate control of the regimental officers.

The construction of forts on the Wall itself led to a blurring of the separate functions of frontier control and military defence. However, the functions remained separate. The construction of the Wall also blurred a further distinction, that between the military dispositions and the boundary of the province. Hadrian's Wall was not necessarily the provincial boundary. It lay close to the northern limit of Brigantian territory but the two boundaries were not necessarily coincidental. At the west end of the Wall three forts were built north of the barrier and it seems possible that these sites were intended not to act as early warning stations, as such work would have been done by mobile army patrols, but to protect provincials living beyond the barrier.

The construction of Hadrian's Wall led in time to the growth of civil settlements outside many forts ([pl. 9.4](#)) and it has been suggested that one purpose of the Wall was to allow the peaceful economic exploitation of the province unhindered by disturbance from the north. Indeed it has been proposed that Hadrian's view was that peace could only be maintained by an ambitious policy of economic development along the frontier, backed up by the intelligent deployment of the army (Birley, 1956; Birley, 1974, 18). It is difficult now, though, to determine the balance between officially encouraged economic development and the natural growth of villages and towns outside forts, settlers being attracted by the existence of a regular source of money.

The building of Hadrian's Wall probably started soon after the visit of the emperor to the province in 122. It was still being modified when the emperor died sixteen years later. The Wall had been extended 6.4 km (4 miles) down the Tyne to Wallsend and the fort at Carvoran had been rebuilt in stone while in the last years of the reign a start had been made on rebuilding the turf wall in stone. Nevertheless, within months of Hadrian's death in July 138, his successor, Antoninus Pius, ordered the abandonment of Hadrian's Wall, a move northwards into southern Scotland and the construction of a new Wall, the Antonine Wall ([pl. 9.5](#); [fig. 9.6](#)). The reasons for this change in policy are still a matter of debate. It has been suggested that Hadrian's Wall was out of touch with the main centres of resistance to Rome in Caledonia (Gillam, 1958, 66–7), that the tribes of the Scottish Lowlands had been troublesome and needed to be brought within

more immediate Roman control (Frere, 1978, 173–4), and that the expansion of the province had no connection with the local situation but was a response to the

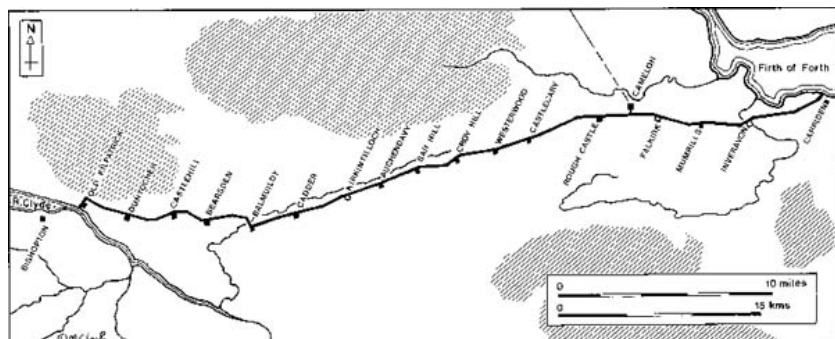


Figure 9.6 The Antonine Wall

accession of a new emperor (Birley, 1974, 17–18; Breeze, 1976, 74–8). Antoninus Pius was not Hadrian's first choice as his successor and there were other people in Rome who considered that they had a better claim to the throne. In such circumstances a brief and successful foreign war, bringing military prestige to an emperor who had never commanded an army, would help secure his peaceful accession: almost exactly a hundred years before, Claudius had invaded Britain, according to the historian Suetonius, to obtain a triumph. It is certainly interesting that at a time when the army could have moved forward to the conquest of the whole island relatively easily there was only a limited expansion of the province.

The new Wall, the building of which commenced under the direction of the new governor of Britain, Lollius Urbicus (pl. 9.5), crossed the Forth–Clyde isthmus from Bo'ness to Old Kilpatrick and was only half the length of its predecessor (Hanson and Maxwell, 1983a; Keppie, 1982). It was not built of stone, but of turf placed on a stone base 15 Roman feet wide. As on Hadrian's Wall a wide and deep ditch lay in front. Forts were placed at an average distance of 13 km (8 miles) apart: owing to the length of the Antonine Wall there were only six forts and they were a little more widely spaced than those on Hadrian's Wall. Recent discoveries have suggested that at each mile interval between these forts lay a fortlet (fig. 9.7), each the same size as a milecastle or milefortlet on the southern frontier (Gillam, 1976; Keppie and Walker, 1981).

No turrets have yet been found on the Antonine Wall, though they exist on contemporary continental frontiers (p. 160 above); however, different structures appear. At three points pairs of turf platforms were attached to

the rear of the Wall (Steer, 1957). It has been suggested that these were the bases for signal fires (fig. 9.7), and indeed two pairs face north towards the outpost forts while the third pair looks up the Clyde valley to the fort at Bothwellhaugh. The other type of structure is rather different. In one short stretch of the Wall three small enclosures, each measuring about

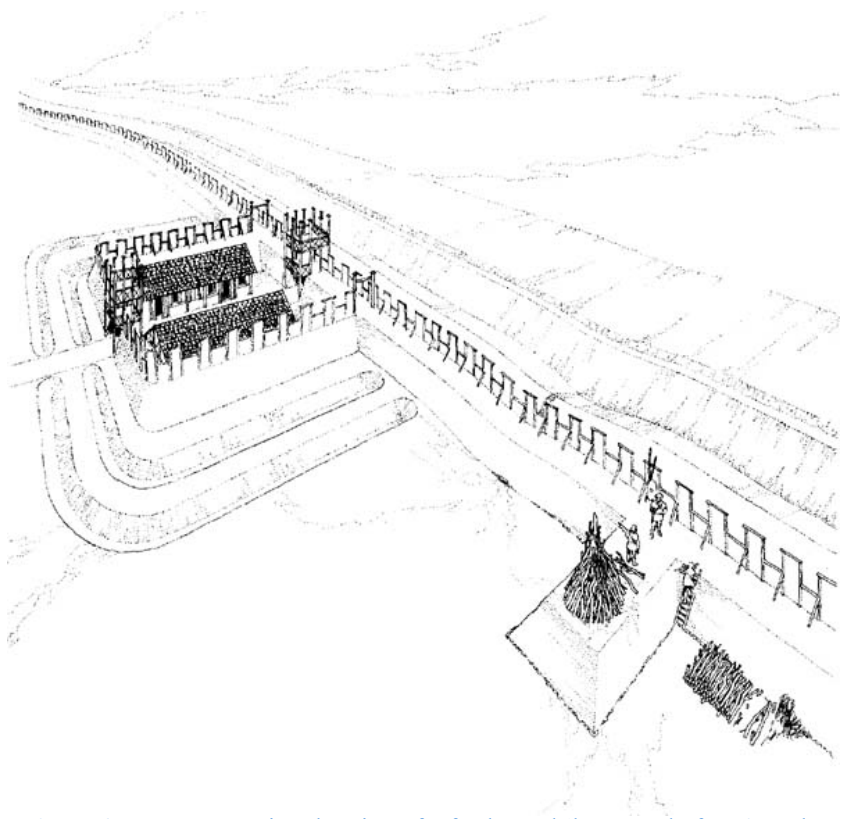


Figure 9.7 Reconstruction drawing of a fortlet and ‘beacon platform’ on the Antonine Wall (*M. J. Moore*)

11 m by 8 m (36 by 26ft), lie within a small ditch, together with an intervening fortlet, about 300 m (330 yard) apart. Excavation of one site has failed to reveal any evidence for its function.

One distinctive feature of Hadrian's Wall was lacking on its northern successor: the Vallum. However, a road seems to have formed part of the earliest plans for the Antonine Wall. No road had been provided on Hadrian's Wall, presumably because of the proximity of the Stanegate, though it seems that in places a path led along the north berm of the Vallum. The lack of any earlier road across the Forth–Clyde isthmus

presumably led to the realization of the need for one.

The Antonine Wall in its essentials was thus very similar to Hadrian's Wall, but different in its details. The provision of a linear barrier, the spacing and size of the forts and the milefortlets, were all based on Hadrian's Wall. The road, the 'beacon platforms' and the small enclosures were additions to the repertoire of the frontier builders. In another way too the Antonine Wall moved forward from Hadrian's Wall. The construction of the forts on Hadrian's Wall was an afterthought. The forts, at first built astride the Wall wherever possible, were clearly only placed on the barrier for convenience and their planning ignored the Wall. On the Antonine Wall, on the other hand, the forts all lay behind the Wall, though usually still attached to it, while their planning related them closely to the barrier. Nevertheless this is not to say that fighting tactics had changed. Both Walls probably operated in broadly the same fashion and the military issue would still be decided in the field, not from behind ramparts and ditches.

There is one other similarity between Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall: a change in plan during the building operations. On the northern Wall this took the form of the construction of new forts on the barrier. In the western two-thirds of the Wall, that is west of the Forth–Clyde watershed at Castlecary, eight new forts were added, reducing the distance between any two forts to a little over 3 km (2 miles). It seems possible that this spacing was not repeated in the eastern sector, perhaps only two or three forts being built rather than the five which would have been required to reproduce the same pattern. Many of these new forts were smaller than the first series of Wall forts, only being able to hold a detachment rather than a full unit. Thus, although the number of forts was trebled, the number of men on the Wall was probably only doubled (Breeze and Dobson, 1978, 96).

The density of structures on the Wall reflected a close spacing of forts and fortlets in southern Scotland, which cluster especially close in the south-west, where timber towers have also been recorded between certain forts and fortlets (Breeze, 1974; Maxwell, 1977). These military dispositions may reflect a preoccupation with local control, new views on the best distribution of military units, or perhaps a determination that no local disturbance should damage the prestige gained by Antoninus Pius through the successful move north.

No line of milefortlets and towers is known on either flank of the Antonine Wall, though a fort and two fortlets situated on the plateau above the south bank of the Clyde overlooked the estuary of that river, while two forts lay beyond the east end of the Wall on the southern shore of the Forth. Forts also lay in advance of the eastern end of the Wall along the road to

the Tay (pl. 9.8). These outposts may have been concerned to protect friendly tribes, or new provincials, in Fife rather than provide advance warning of attack, though the positioning of the forts on the route south from Caledonia is suggestive.

The Antonine Wall as completed, perhaps in the late 140s, was the most strongly garrisoned frontier in Britain. Thereafter there was a swing away from this emphasis on the frontier line when the network was reorganized later in the reign of Antoninus Pius; it seems then that one fort on the Wall was abandoned while the garrisons of at least two others were reduced. Some forts and fortlets in southern Scotland were abandoned at the same time, while the size of one of the outpost forts was reduced. The Antonine Wall and its attendant forts were abandoned about 163, for reasons which are unclear, and Hadrian's Wall recommissioned (Hartley, 1972, 36–42; Gillam, 1973, 55–6; Breeze, 1976). Over the next twenty years or so that Wall was in turn modified, perhaps in part in the light of experience gained on the Antonine Wall.

At first Hadrian's Wall seems to have been restored to its earlier condition when abandoned in the 140s, with the exception of the turf wall, where rebuilding in stone was carried through to completion, the construction of a road along the frontier, and the retention of more outpost forts than under Hadrian, presumably to allow the army to maintain better surveillance over the former provincial territory (Breeze and Dobson, 1978, 124–8). Elsewhere milecastles and turrets were repaired, forts reoccupied by similar-sized garrisons to those which had marched out twenty years before, and even the ditch of the Vallum was cleaned out. However, further changes were gradually introduced. Some turrets, especially in the central Crags sector, were abandoned while some milecastle gates were narrowed so that they were only usable by pedestrian traffic. Few of these changes can be closely dated, nor is it known what effect the invasion of the province by the northern tribes in the early 180s and the unrest at the end of the century had on the frontier. It appears, though, that in these years the garrisons of many forts on the Wall were strengthened while new large units were introduced into a reduced number of outpost forts to the north. In addition, extra units of scouts and irregulars are attested at several forts in the third century and it is possible that these units were in garrison from the final years of the preceding century. The main burden of these changes was not only to move the main theatre of action even further from the Wall than before, but also to emphasize the essentially bureaucratic role of the linear barrier, the position of which was irrelevant to the disposition of the army units. Almost in recognition of the reduced importance of the Wall, or

so it seems, the Vallum was abandoned as a demarcation line and civilians were allowed to encroach on the once-enclosed space, and even build their houses and shops immediately outside the forts. It is not known how large an area was kept under surveillance by the thousand-strong regiments based in the outpost forts but the land up to the abandoned Antonine Wall, perhaps even to the Tay, would not have been too extensive for them to patrol.

The construction of Hadrian's Wall and the occupation of southern Scotland had led to the abandonment of many forts in Wales (Davies, 1980, 264–9) and northern England (Breeze and Dobson, 1985): the primary purpose of many of the remaining garrisons in Wales was probably supervision of the mines (Hanson, 1986). The return south in the 160s brought a requirement to find homes for at least twenty units. Wherever possible former stations were repaired or rebuilt but as some sites were no longer available at least two new forts had to be constructed while several forts, relinquished as long as forty years before, were recommissioned. The reoccupation of northern England does not carry with it the implication that this area was troublesome and that the tribes needed controlling, or that the army was adopting a policy of defence in depth: it was merely that regiments, whose presence was necessary for the proper defence of the province, needed a home somewhere and there was a limit to the number of units which could be placed on, or in the vicinity of, the Wall (Dobson, 1970, 34).

Disturbances are recorded in Britain on several occasions in the second century, and many appear to have concerned the northern frontier. As a result the province welcomed a series of highly qualified governors throughout the century (Birley, 1981a, 395). The most serious warfare took place in the 180s and 190s. On the former occasion the northern tribes crossed the Wall and killed a general and his army before being defeated. Towards the end of the century, immediately following the end of the civil war in 197, the governor had to purchase peace from the northern tribes who were threatening the frontier. Ten years later, partially as a result of further trouble on the frontier according to one historian, Herodian, Septimius Severus came to Britain with the intention of finishing the imperial task and completing the conquest of the island. His death at York in February 211 brought that operation to a premature end; his conquests were abandoned and the troops withdrawn from the newly constructed base at Carpow on the Tay. The situation reverted to the *status quo* (Leach and Wilkes, 1977).

While no doubt the army continued to maintain watch and ward over the

northern marches through the third century, the soldiers also paid increasing attention to their forts, rebuilding and repairing when necessary, but also adding new amenities like aqueducts. This activity continued into the 240s, but thereafter little is attested (Mann, 1971, nos 160–183). Coin series frequently end in the 270s. When this evidence is combined with the arrival of new units at many of the northern forts in the fourth century (Mann, 1974), it may be suggested that the second half of the third century saw an abandonment of some forts as their garrisons were transferred elsewhere, or perhaps disbanded. On the Wall several forts had their garrisons reduced, though none appears to have been completely abandoned.

It may not be coincidental that a new local government unit is first attested in northern England at this time. This was the *civitas Carvetiorum*, in the Eden valley, now presumably charged with the administration of part of the area abandoned by the military authorities (Birley, 1967, 11–13). The only other *civitas* known in the area, that of the Brigantes in Yorkshire, had probably been constituted under Hadrian (Hartley, 1966, 19). The rarity of such local government authorities in the north is probably a reflection of the continuing military presence over much of the area (Mann, 1974, 38–9). The growth of villas and other substantial rural establishments may also have been discouraged by the military presence (Higham, 1986, 177). However, the presence of such a large garrison should have led to major demands on the local economy (Manning, 1974; Breeze, 1984), though this is not reflected in the generally small quantity of Roman material found on native sites in the north.

Trade across the frontier might also be expected to have taken place, for military contact was only one aspect of the relationship between Rome and the tribes beyond the Empire. Analogies with other frontiers suggest that the Romans will have striven to establish treaties with these tribes and certainly, in the late second and early third centuries, treaties are recorded with the Caledonians and the Maeatae. These treaties may have restricted the movement of natives in the vicinity of the frontier, as was certainly the case on the Danube in the late second century. The payment of bribes was another frequently-used branch of diplomacy and is recorded for Britain. Some of the coin hoards found beyond the frontier may have originated in subsidies (Robertson, 1978, 192). Other high-class goods, such as glass vessels, found in northern Scotland (Robertson, 1970) may also have been bribes, or perhaps imports by local chieftains. However, the level of contact between Roman and barbarian, as measured by the discovery of Roman artefacts beyond the frontier, does not seem to have been great. This may

reflect lack of trade, though the almost equal paucity of Roman material from native settlements south of the frontier in northern England may suggest that this is too simplistic an hypothesis. The one site which stands out from the rest is Traprain Law, the hill-fort considered to have been the capital of the Votadini. Not only did this town maintain its defences throughout the Roman period, and continue to receive exports from the Empire, but in the second century it manufactured goods for the provincial market.

While the northern frontier was enjoying a quiescent phase in its life in the late third century, defences along the more southerly coasts of England were being strengthened (fig. 9.8). A total of ten forts were built in the third and fourth centuries along the coast from the Wash to the Solent (pl. 9.9): nine of these are named in the late fourth-century army list, the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Occ. 28), as forming the command of the Count of the Saxon Shore (Johnson, 1976). New forts and other installations were also built along the west coast in the fourth century, while at the very end of the century a series of towers were erected along the cliffs of east Yorkshire.

These forts, fortlets and towers were not built as part of a single coherent project, but piecemeal over perhaps 150 years. The *Notitia* records the garrisons of nine forts and in each case it was a normal army unit, not a naval force. However, many sites were isolated from the road network and therefore best approached by sea. Archaeological investigation of several forts has not been successful in revealing details of the internal arrangements which might help in determining their function and role. In short, it is impossible now to know how these installations worked, though it is clear that their intention was to protect the British provinces from raids by pirates and tribes beyond the empire: Picts, Scots, Saxons, Franks and Attacotti.



Figure 9.8 Saxon Shore forts and other fourth-century defences in Britain

The raids of these tribes increased in ferocity and frequency during the fourth century. The new enemies are first recorded in the late third century. The Franks and Saxons, from their homelands in present-day north-west Germany, sailed across the North Sea and attacked the eastern and southern coasts of Britain. In the north, the Picts are first recorded in 297 and the Romans campaigned against them in the early fourth century; the creation of the Pictish kingdom was probably a reaction, albeit subconscious, to the strong Roman presence in the southern part of Britain (Mann, 1974, 40–1). The Scots, who still lived in Ireland, do not come on to the scene until later in the fourth century; they seem to have played a part in the events of 342–3 which led Constans to visit Britain in winter. The home of the Attacotti is

not known.

The Romans responded to the new threat in two ways: by fighting and by the improvement of the defences of the island, such as by the construction of the coastal forts. Much of our evidence for fighting depends upon the involvement of the emperor or a member of the imperial family and therefore it may be that these sources are seriously distorted. Specific literary references to raiding on the west coast of Britain (as opposed to general references to raiding by the Scots) are, for example, non-existent, yet the construction of new forts on the west coast goes some way to indicating the thrust of such raids. On the northern frontier it is difficult to relate the archaeological and documentary evidence for the improvement of the frontier defences to particular historical events. Too much may even be read into the statement that the frontier defences were restored following the 'Barbarian Conspiracy' of 367, for Theodosius, the general credited with the work, was the father of the emperor at the time when the events of those years were recorded.

Archaeology attests the revitalization of the northern frontier in the fourth century following the rundown of the defences which began in the later third century (Breeze and Dobson, 1978, 207–29). Some forts were repaired, others rebuilt in part or whole after long abandonment. Where dating evidence exists most points to this activity taking place in the later part of the fourth century and much has traditionally been associated with the restoration of the frontier following the invasions of 367. However, some rebuilding took place earlier. At several forts new-style barrack-blocks have been recognized. Instead of a single building divided into ten or so rooms, now the same space was apportioned into rather fewer separate little buildings termed 'chalets' (Wilkes, 1966, 128–37). It is not known how many men occupied each 'chalet'; it has been proposed that each one was the home of a soldier and his family (Daniels, 1980). However, while this cannot be substantiated, it is interesting that army units in the fourth century seem to be much smaller than their predecessors (Duncan-Jones, 1978) while some civil settlements outside forts seem to have been abandoned by the late fourth century (Salway, 1965, 14).

The *Notitia Dignitatum* records the existence of thirteen or fourteen new-style units in northern Britain in the late fourth century. Unfortunately, the document is mute on the date of the introduction of these regiments into the island. Frequently, too, their location is obscure as the Roman place names cannot now be identified. It has been postulated that these units reflect the provision of defence in depth (Jones, 1978, 140–2), but it seems equally likely that their purpose was the same as their predecessors: to provide

additional support for the units on the Wall. This would be especially necessary now that the outpost forts had been abandoned. It is not certain when the forces were withdrawn from these forts, though recent work has suggested that they were taken out of Britain by Constantine in 314 (Casey and Savage, 1980); the scouts, however, seem to have survived until 367. Thereafter small buffer states may have been established by the Romans north of Hadrian's Wall, though the evidence for this is contentious (Mann, 1974, 42).

One other addition to the military forces in Britain emphasizes the pressure on the army. Throughout most of the fourth century the Empire could only respond to a major attack on the island by sending an army across from the continent. Towards the end of the century a small field army was established in Britain: the location of this force is not known.

Barbarian raids and invasions continued to plague Britain into the fifth century. At the same time successive usurpers milked the island's army in their attempts to win the empire. Nevertheless the army continued to maintain its role and no barbarian tribes secured a foothold inside the frontiers until the Saxons were invited later in the fifth century. It is not known how the life of the frontier installations in Britain ended. Possibly when the pay chests ceased to arrive the soldiers drifted off elsewhere to seek a living, or settled down with their families to a life of farming. The discovery of certain objects within some forts has led to the supposition that the soldiers' families moved inside, but whether the date of this move was within the Roman period, or after the end of Roman Britain in 410, is uncertain. Perhaps there was no sudden end, rather a gradual decline and a dawning realization that the rule of Rome in Britain had ended.



9.1 Milecastle 42 (Cawfields) on Hadrian's Wall. The north and south gates are visible; nothing is known of the internal accommodation



9.2 Turret 48a (Willowford east) on Hadrian's Wall



9.3 Aerial view of Hadrian's Wall looking east. The Wall snakes along the crags while the Vallum crosses the lower grounds to the south



9.4 The fort at Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall from the air. The Wall comes up to the northern corners of the fort. Within can be seen the headquarters building in the centre, flanked by the commanding officer's house and two granaries, and with the hospital behind; only one group of barrack-blocks has been exposed



9.5 Aerial view of the Antonine Wall at Croy Hill looking east. The Wall zigzags over the landscape, following the crest of the hill in the foreground



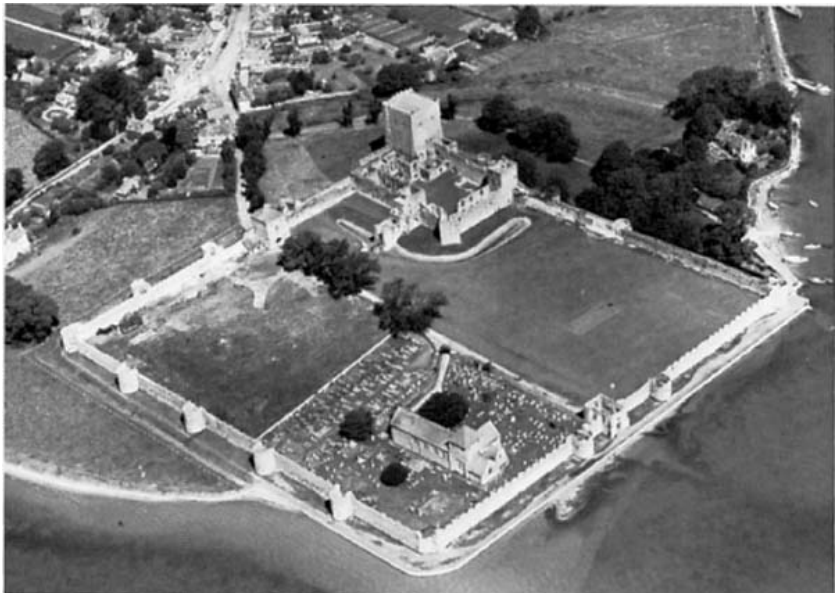
9.6 Aerial view of the fort at Rough Castle on the Antonine Wall looking north. The Antonine Wall crosses diagonally and to the south the two ditches defending the fort can be seen. To the east lies the annexe, protected by one ditch to the south and three to the east



9.7 The Bridgeness Distance Slab from the eastern end of the Antonine Wall recording the construction of nearly 42/3 miles by soldiers of *legio II Augusta*. To the left, a Roman soldier rides down a group of four barbarians, while to the right, the successful conclusion of the campaign is celebrated by the sacrifice of a pig, sheep and bull



9.8 The Roman fort at Ardoch from the air. The surviving earthworks reveal a complicated history. In the second century, the fort served as an outpost for the Antonine Wall, and was surrounded by as many as five ditches to the north and east



9.9 The Saxon Shore fort at Portchester from the air. The high walls, external bastions and small gates reveal a preoccupation with defence not found in the earlier forts on Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall

• AFRICA •

Charles Daniels

Africa is, as the others show (and indeed as Gnaeus Piso, who was once the governor of that country, told me) like a leopard's skin; for it is spotted with inhabited places that are surrounded by waterless and desert land. The Egyptians call such inhabited places 'oases'. (Strabo, *Geography* 2.5.33)

This section sets out to describe the frontiers of Roman North Africa, but, as no frontier exists in a vacuum, the terrain, climate and native populations are discussed when necessary, and an historical framework is given, as well as some account of the provincial armies.

Of the three land frontiers of the Empire, the northern, the eastern and the southern, the last was by far the longest. From Rabat to Tunis, and thence via Cairo to the Red Sea at Suez, measures as the crow flies almost 4,000 km (2,500 miles), or further than the distance from London to Timbuctoo. But the Roman frontier lay, for the first three centuries of this era, some 1,000 km (620 miles) south of Cairo, and its course from there to the Atlantic was in no way a simple straight line. The terrain it crossed varied considerably, as did the vegetation (or lack of it) and the culture and way of life of the local peoples. To the east were Egypt and Cyrenaica, in the centre Tripolitania, proconsular Africa, Numidia and Mauretania Caesariensis, while far to the west Tingitana lay isolated from the rest by the Riff and Atlas ranges, so that at times its links with Spain were stronger than those with Africa.

Egypt and Cyrenaica

Egypt (fig. 10.1), it is normally claimed, is no more than the valley of the Nile, a narrow strip of cultivation (less than 4 per cent of the country) which owes its fertility to annual

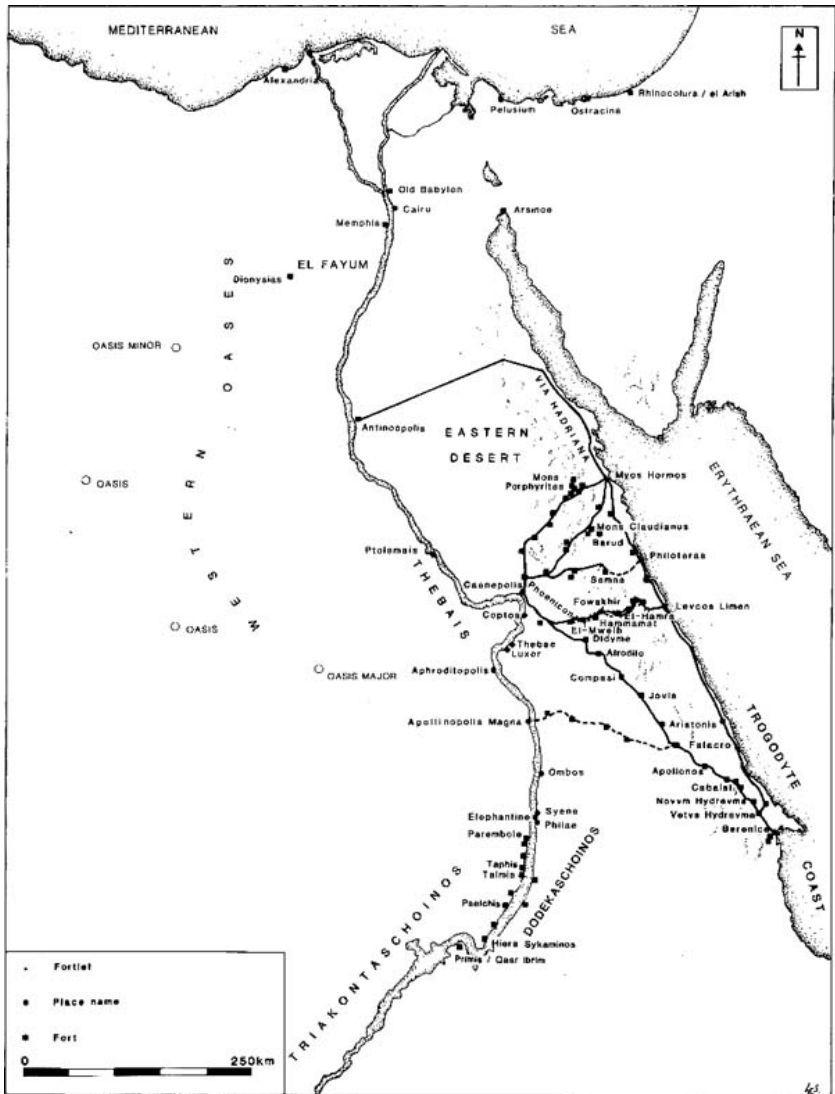


Figure 10.1 Egypt

inundation and the deposition of riverine silt. This truth is obvious when

the absolute contrast between green river bank and stark bordering bluffs of striated rock, barren gravel and occasional sand, is seen from the air. Apart from the Delta, only in the Fayum, and a handful of Western-Desert oases, is agriculture possible outside the valley.

The western frontier of such a land is of necessity the western river-bank road, with predictable outpost forts in the nearer oases; the southern frontier can only be an arbitrary line drawn across the Nile valley at some chosen point. Only to the east is there an exception. The severely desiccated highlands of the Eastern Desert present a rugged and barren wilderness, with the Red Sea hills, at their highest some 2,000 m (6,600 ft), running like a north-south spine parallel with the coast. Here, because of the presence of gold, emeralds, much-prized granite and imperial porphyry, mining and quarrying settlements had existed since Pharaonic times, or were planted by the Romans. At the same time a growing trade in spices and luxuries via the Erythraean Sea from Aethiopia, southern Arabia, India and the east meant that a handful of ports had been established on the barren Red Sea coast in Ptolemaic times, with cleared tracks, provided with cisterns, connecting them with the Nile. Under the Romans these became regulated roads with forts and garrisons, and provision for teams of draft animals in the quarry areas.

That Egypt managed to evade the clutches of Rome during the late Republic was largely luck; it was certainly not the result of good management, for the later Ptolemies were both weak and incompetent, and Sulla and Crassus each had plans to seize the land. But it was not until after the defeat and death of Cleopatra in 30 BC that Octavian was able to take possession of Egypt and its wealth. Cornelius Gallus, his first prefect, easily defeated both Egyptians and Meroitic Nubians to establish the earliest frontier at Aswan (Syene), with a client Nubia to the south. The northern portion of that, the so-called Triakontaschoinos, extending 320 km (200 miles) from Philae almost to Wadi Halfa, was under an appointed *tyrannus* (CIL, III, 14147). However, a Nubian uprising occurred in 25 BC which saw the destruction of Syene and other frontier forts, after which Gaius Petronius, Gallus' successor, marched over 600 km (370 miles) south to destroy the northern Nubian capital of Gebel Barkal (Napata) and plant a Roman garrison in the hill-top fortress of Qasr Ibrim (Primis), some 200 km (120 miles) south of Syene. A short time later, after further trouble, Augustus took in the so-called Dodekaschoinos by pushing the frontier 130 km (80 miles) south to Maharraqa (Hiera Sykaminos). Simultaneously, he relinquished both Roman control of the area south and further tribute, in return for a secure peace.

Although historical sources state that Primis (fig. 10.11B) was only held for something like two years, archaeological finds suggest that it continued as an outpost until the end of the first century AD, if not longer. Maspero has claimed that one of the buildings there was definitely to be attributed to Severus, while the prefect and other senior officers of *legio II Traiana fortis* are mentioned in a letter written from there some time not very long before AD 247 (Kirwan, 1977).

Once established at Hieria Sykaminos, the frontier remained static until the reign of Diocletian, in spite of a possible plan for expansion under Nero, when an expedition visited Meroë and continued as far as the *Sudd*, south of Malakal. This unbroken peace with Meroë produced such stability and prosperity that, as Adams (1977) states, the area as far south as the second cataract, which was previously a wilderness, became one of the most fertile, prosperous and populous in the entire kingdom.

The *Pax Komana* was kept by the army. Initially this was large; Strabo records three legions, three *alae* and nine cohorts, disposed: one legion and three cohorts at Alexandria, the other legions probably at Old Babylon and either Coptos or Thebes, three cohorts at Syene, with the remaining three cohorts and three *alae* situated strategically about the country. Until AD 106, Egypt had a north-eastern frontier with the Nabataean kingdom, therefore it is possible that troops were stationed at Pelusium in the eastern Delta, or Arsinoë (near Suez), as well as at Ostracine or el Arish (Rhinocolara) on the frontier itself.

As peace continued there were reductions in the garrison, until by the middle of Hadrian's reign, or soon after, only a single legion remained, *legio II Traiana* at Alexandria. Lesquier thought there was a corresponding drop in the auxiliary units, but recently this has been questioned. Nevertheless, the overall size of the army of Egypt fell from an initial *c.* 23,000, to half that strength or less, by the middle of the third century, and at the same time it was gradually spread more evenly about the country. In the Dodekaschoinos, the southern frontier region, Lesquier gives ample evidence for legionary troops and auxiliary units, or detachments in garrison during the first, second and early third centuries at such forts as Syene, Kalabsha (Talmis), Dakka (Pselchis) and Hieria Sykaminos. Of structural remains little has been recorded, and all is now below Lake Nasser, although Monneret de Villard published what looks like part of a marching camp with *clavicula* at Philae, and parts of the fort at Pselchis were excavated by Firth in 1909.

It has been argued that neither the Eastern Desert roads and forts, nor the southern Nile forts, constituted a frontier (*limes*), as both lacked the *sine*

qua non of any frontier: a hostile people beyond it. The evidence suggests quite the opposite. The growth of trade in the Red Sea produced an increase in Arabian piracy, until imperial retribution dealt with it. On land, the settled Meroitic town dwellers and farmers of the Nile were very different from the mobile tribes of the south-eastern and south-western deserts, whose principal tribal groupings are known under the names of Blemmyes (modern Beja), between the Red Sea hills and the river, Trogodytes along the coast, and Nobades (Nubae, Nobatae and Noba) to the west. Strabo dismissed them all as most unwarlike, but it is clear that they soon realized the benefits of cross-frontier raiding and pillage. A Milan papyrus of late first-century date describes a fight between Roman cavalry and a mixed band of Aethiopians and Trogodytes, who were driven off, while a fragmentary inscription of Hadrianic date records that after a two-day pursuit a certain Serenus disposed of a body of Agriophages and recovered booty on camel-back. These people, from well south of the border, had been raiding deep into the Thebaïd. Amongst the disturbances of Pius' reign, Aristides lists trouble from people dwelling along the Red Sea coast, clearly Trogodytes. All suggests that during the first to third centuries the Nile defences and Eastern Desert system constituted a *limes*, with its garrisons experiencing all the normal cut-and-thrust of frontier life.

The Eastern Desert network consisted of a series of roads running from the Nile to the coast. One, starting from Qena, soon forked, one branch going north-east by Mons Porphyrites to Myos Hormos, the other to Mons Claudianus, with a further branch probably running on to Philoteras. These roads were provided with regular garrison posts (fig. 10.1) each including a cistern, external animal lines and sometimes further enclosures. The port of Myos Hormos was a Ptolemaic foundation, but the most conspicuous remains there are the Roman fort (fig. 10.2B), the building of which, or its predecessor, is recorded on a fragmentary inscription of Augustan-Tiberian date from Coptos (*CIL*, III, 6627). Later, projecting circular angle towers were added and the interior altered. When compared with the ample evidence from the northern route, the Philoteras road does not seem to have been used by the Romans beyond the quarries at Semna.

Further south another road ran from Coptos to Phoenicon, where it split, one branch continuing to Leucos Limen, the other running south-east for 257–8 Roman miles to Berenice, which lay on Foul Bay opposite Philae on the Nile. The Leucos Limen road is not mentioned in any ancient source and, having far fewer quarries and mines along its length, it lacks animal lines. Garrisons, however, have left records at several sites (el Mweth, Hammamat and Fowakhir). Posts noted by Lesquier are small by any

standard: 30 by 30 m (98 by 98 ft), 31 by 37 m (100 by 120 ft) and 30 by 50 m (98 by 164 ft). A slightly larger post at el Homra (58 by 83 m, 190 by 272 ft), is recorded as having an isolated building in its centre, a feature perhaps more commonly found in later rather than earlier military forts. But the most remarkable feature of this road is the frequency of inter-visible signal towers in its central sector, placed on heights along the twisting ravines (Meredith, 1953). This has been interpreted as evidence for a valuable traffic, but the system could equally well be interpreted as a *limes*, although of what date is not known.

The southernmost road, to Berenice, is the best documented, being recorded along with its stations in Pliny, the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table. The route, as also the post of Berenice, was the creation of Ptolemy Philadelphus and originally started at Idfu (Apollinopolis) on the Nile. In Roman times the road was taken instead to Coptos and the Idfu track abandoned. This road was undoubtedly a frontier road, with forts and garrisons in addition to the older cisterns. The Augustan–Tiberian inscription already mentioned records work at Berenice and the stations of Compasi and Apollonos,

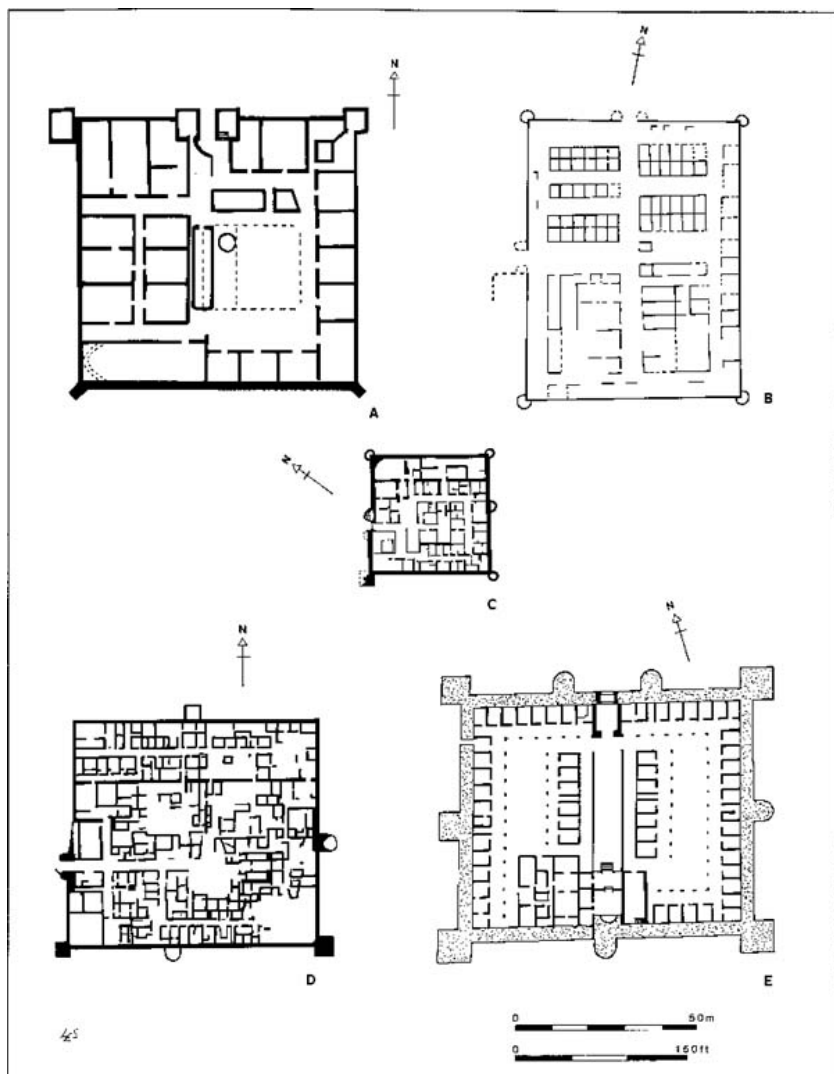


Figure 10.2 Late Roman forts in Egypt: (A) Der el-'Atrash (after Barren and Hume); (B) Myos Hormos (after Scaife); (C) Barud (after Tregenza); (D) Mons Claudianus (after Scaife); (E) Castra Dionysias (after Carrie)

where cisterns were constructed and dedicated; it also states that the workforce of legionaries and auxiliaries built and reconstructed forts.

Under Domitian a *praesidium* was built at an additional site, Afrodito. Pliny relates that goods were carried by camel. Sea captains, naval carpenters and sailors, and the wives of soldiers at Berenice, are all mentioned in assorted texts, as well as officers of mounted Palmyrene

archers escorting caravans for protection against robbers and desert raiders (text of AD 216).

Hadrian attempted to alter the Eastern Desert routes radically, by replacing the Berenice road by a new one, the Via Hadriana. This ran from Antinoöpolis, on the Nile north of Qena, across the desert to the coast where it turned south 'through secure and level places beside the Erythraean Sea' to link Myos Hormos with the other ports and minor anchorages as far south as Berenice. The purpose of this new road may perhaps have been to provide greater security, for it was provided with plentiful watering points (cisterns), posting-stations and forts along its length. The whole work is recorded on an inscription from Antinoöpolis dated 25 February AD 137 (*IRG* I.1142). However, it is doubtful if the road was much used after Hadrian's death; certainly it provided no permanent replacement, or even rival, to the Berenice road, as many records of the later second and third centuries prove.

The supervision of the whole area between Coptos and the Red Sea, including all roads, forts and troops, the caravan trade and the quarrying and mining of stone and metals, was under the control of the Prefect of Berenice (or Mount Berenice). This command is paralleled in Augustan times by similar ones in physically wild, military regions where romanization had hardly begun. Clearly, this was a military prefecture in a true frontier region, and not surprisingly at least two legionary tribunes are known to have held it.

During the disorders of the third century tribal raiding became chronic: Blemmyes in the east and Nubians in the west (Nobades and various Noba tribes) struck deeper and deeper into Upper Egypt; in AD 249, 253, 261 and 265 we know of raids or Roman counter-attacks. Later, the Blemmyes sided with the Palmyrenes during their invasion of Egypt in 270, and although defeated more than once, they occupied Coptos and Ptolemais in 280. All these attacks, together with a series of major revolts, caused considerable destruction to the country and so, Procopius relates, in c. 297 Diocletian decided to withdraw the frontier again to Syene, inviting the Nobades to fill the resultant vacuum, on condition that they kept the Blemmyes out. But Kirwan (1966) has observed that Pselchis and Shellal (Teleleos) were still occupied in the reign of Constantine, and that mid and late fourth-century coins from Talmis show that there, too, close contact was still kept with Roman Egypt ([fig. 10.18](#)).

Diocletian's reforms included an increase in the size of the army: if Jones is correct the number of *limitanei* frontier troops, in the three provinces of the Thebaïd (Upper Egypt), (Lower) Egypt, and Libya (Marmarica and

Cyrenaica) was raised to some 64,000. They were placed in towns and cities in the Delta, the Suez-Pelusium-Rhinocorara region, the western oases and along the length of the Nile to Philae, where the island, with its shrines, was fortified and garrisoned by *legio I Maximiana*. Other new forts included Dionysias in the Fayum and a fort enclosing the temple of Luxor, where a detachment of *legio III Diocletiana* was stationed (fig. 10.9B).

It is uncertain how late the Eastern Desert ports continued to be held. Coins of Constantius II have been found at Berenice, and Murray (1967) described the forts along the Berenice road as quadrangular with rounded towers at their corners and gates. That nearest to Berenice, Vetus Hydreuma, has no less than five separate walled enclosures, one with towers, the rest without. This suggests that the road stations were rebuilt in the style of the late empire, and held during the reign of Constantine, at least.

By the early fifth century certain sites on the Nile and in the desert were definitely in the hands of the Blemmyes. It is possible that there was a withdrawal from the south, while the northern quarries and Myos Hormos continued to be held, with a frontier running along the Leucos Limen road. The road has already been referred to; several sites in the Claudianus–Porphyrites area have yielded mid or late fourth-century coins and the published plans (fig. 10.2) of a number of forts show (added?) projecting towers and gate-towers in the style of the late empire.

Three posts in the Duke of the Thebaid's command could be Eastern Desert sites: an *ala* of Palmyrenes is placed at Foenicionis (= Phoenicon), echoing the earlier mounted-archer guards on the Berenice road, a cohort is *in castris Lapidariorum*, which is presumably a reference to the northern quarry sites, as by the time of the *Notitia* the Blemmyes were moving into the southern area, if they had not already taken it over and a detachment of *legio III Diocletiana* is placed at a site called Praesentia. This is usually amended to read Praesidio: *ostraca* from Fowakhir on the Leucos Limen road (Roman, but not closely datable) show that the troops there were in regular contact with a place called Praesidium. Could it be that the *Notitia* detachment was either situated in, or had connections with the Eastern Desert? Of these definite or possible sites, however, none is further south than the Leucos Limen road.

Whereas Diocletian increased the army and built new defences, Constantine turned to diplomacy in his dealings with the Blemmyes and Nubians. Flavius Abinnaeus, who commanded the garrison at Dionysias, described how he escorted a Blemmye delegation, led by no less a person than Senecio, *Comes Limitis*, into the Imperial presence at Constantinople

c. AD 336–7, after which Abinnaeus spent three years with the tribe as a Roman ambassador or agent. In spite of this, at some time before 346 the tribe once more struck, and again in 378, 399 and 406. Another ambassador extraordinary, Olympiodorus, visited important sites c. 420–1 at Talmis, Taphis and Primis on the Nile and Phoinokon and Chiris in the Eastern Desert, all in Blemmye hands. At a slightly earlier date the tribe also had a settlement at Elephantine. These settlements, and the way that some of the Blemmyes had access to important Roman officials, have even prompted Kirwan

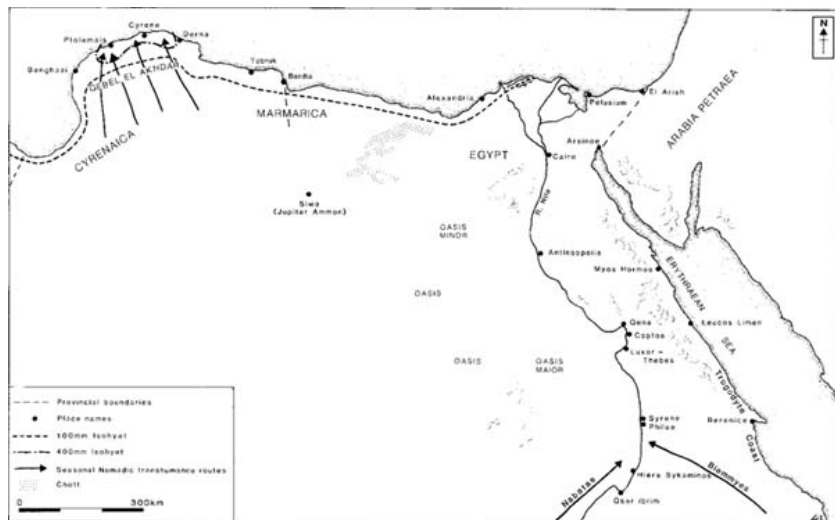


Figure 10.3 Cyrenaica to Egypt. Provinces, principal sites, regions, geographical features, and transhumance routes

(1982) to conclude that some at least of the tribe must have been Roman federates employed in frontier defence.

In the mid-fifth century the Blemmyes and Nobatae united in their devastation of Upper Egypt, until, finally, retribution came at the hands of two Roman commanders, Maximinus and Florus, each of whom inflicted a heavy defeat. The tribes were forced to accept a solemn treaty, signed in the precincts of the great temple of Isis at Philae, the ‘National Shrine’ of the pagan Nubians. A century's peace apparently followed.

West of the Delta, and Alexandria, the vegetation soon stops (fig. 10.3). The desert approaches the shore and only an occasional settlement along the coast road, or random variations of terrain (Halfaya pass or the cliffs at Bardia), break the monotony for nearly 800 km (500 miles), until the

Cyrenaican plateau is reached. Here, roughly between Derna and Benghazi, a limestone tableland rises in two steps from the sea, to a height of 1,000 m (3,280 ft). This is sufficient to produce an annual rainfall well in excess of 400 mm (16 in.) on the lower plateau, and above 600 mm (24 in.) on the summit, ensuring the permanent cover of evergreen shrubs which gives the area its name, Gebel el Akhdar, the Green Mountain. To the south the plateau falls away gently to the desert and precipitation rapidly decreases.

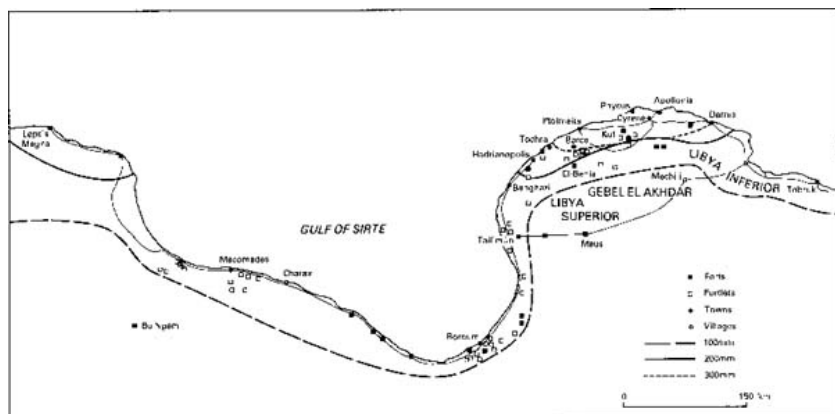


Figure 10.4 Cyrenaica to Tripolitania: sites, roads and rainfall

Attracted by its fertility, the Greeks colonized the area from the seventh century BC and established the five cities which gave it its name of Pentapolis. In 96 BC Ptolemy Apion bequeathed it to Rome, and in 74 the first *quaestor* arrived.

Augustus joined Cyrenaica with Crete, across the Libyan Sea, to form a single province under a senatorial proconsul. The early history of the province was mostly uneventful, and like Egypt it saw no major revision of its frontier; indeed, whether it ever possessed a true *limes* or, until the time of Diocletian, a proper provincial garrison, can be questioned.

The occasional, early, small military post may have existed and Goodchild thought that Bir Umm el-Garanigh, in the Syrtica, had been occupied in the first century, although there was no real frontier road, then or later, either along the coast or around the southern approaches to the Gebel. This may have been because the principal cities had been so thoroughly fortified in hellenistic times, with impressive stone walls, that they were more than adequately protected.

Early troubles with the Marmaridae (Augustan date) and the Nasamones (under Domitian) were dealt with successfully by troops from outside the province, and peace was maintained. It was, however, rudely shattered not

by invasion, but by the Jewish uprising of AD 115–16, which produced appalling slaughter and damage, especially in Cyrene. Again, external forces were necessary to restore order; but even then it was not thought necessary to increase the garrison from a single equitate quingenary cohort.

There was no external threat to the safety of the province until the middle of the third century. In 268–9 Probus, then governor of Egypt, was called in to defeat the Marmaridae. Shortly after, *c.* AD 284 Diocletian carried out extensive reforms: two new provinces, Libya Superior (or Pentapolis) and Libya Inferior (or Sicca, Dry Libya) were created, and the garrison of the whole region was very greatly increased, although unfortunately, details of its composition are unknown as the appropriate page of the *Notitia* is missing. But something is known of the late defences themselves. A line of fortified posts was constructed from the coast, south of Benghazi, via Tailimun ([fig. 10.19L](#)) as far as Msus, and in time a whole series of small, late blockhouses, many of Byzantine date, sprang up in the coastal region between Benghazi and Ptolemais. Inland, south and south-east of Barce, forts were established on the plateau, including Benia ([fig. 10.19M](#)). In the Kuf region, the very broken country between Barce and Cyrene, which is intersected by a complex series of deep ravines, numerous fortified buildings were constructed. East again, Cyrene itself was protected by a screen of posts running from the coastal area near Derna to the Kuf system just mentioned.

The southern edge of the plateau more or less coincides with the 200 mm (8 in.) isohyet, but south of this the rainfall soon drops well below 100 mm (4 in.), creating predesert conditions, cultivatable only by the most careful husbanding of water. Here, actual military posts were very few: at Msus a simple watchtower existed, within an outer enclosure. Whether there was anything at Mekili, a similar site, is not known. The inland wadis are strewn with a liberal scatter of so-called ‘fortified farms’, which continue to the east across the equally arid terrain of southern Libya Sicca. Away to the south-east, the outlying oasis of Siwa, Jupiter Ammon, was certainly included within the province, but details of the garrison are not now known.

From AD 390 onwards the Libyas had little respite from barbarian raiding; the Austuriani struck in 395–410 and again in 449. The troubles of the time and the problems of defence are well described by Synesius of Cyrene, Bishop of Ptolemais, who suffered them both.

West from the Pentapolis the desert again sweeps to the shore around the desolate reaches of Greater Syrtis. Some 900 km (560 miles) of sub-desert

steppe, here and there interrupted by a road post or occasional small town, separate Benghazi from Lepcis Magna. The Antonine Itinerary records the distance as 568 Roman miles, with twenty-two intermediate stages.

Africa, Numidia and the Mauretanas

From the Atlantic to the Syrtica most of the coastal region of North Africa, the Tell, lies within the Mediterranean domain, which means that in Roman times the cultivation of cereals in the valleys and plains, and vines and olives on the hillsides, was possible without irrigation, while many of the higher mountain slopes were covered with timber. The southern limit of this region (fig. 10.5) is usually taken to follow the 400 mm (16 in.)

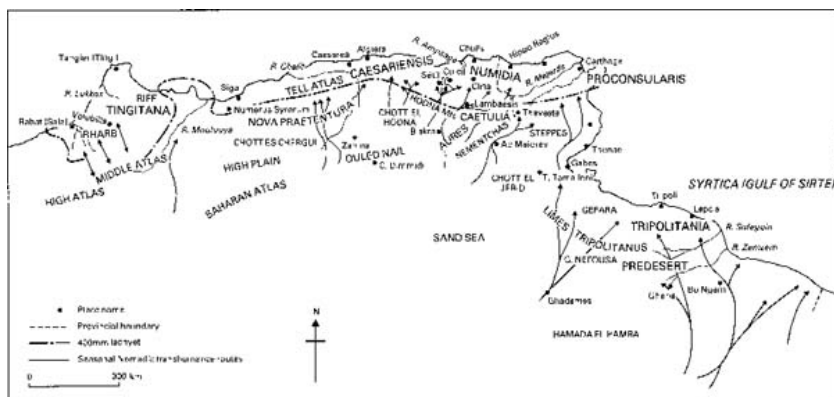


Figure 10.5 Tripolitania to Tingitana: provinces, principal sites, regions, geographical features and transhumance routes

isohyet. Between the Tell and the desert lies an intermediate zone, usually called preSaharan. This ranges from mountains to steppe-land where, dependent on soil, climate and rainfall variations, cultivation of olives and some cereals is possible if water is carefully used, and the natural vegetation provides grazing for part of the year. The zone includes some of north-west Morocco, and all of the High Plains of Algeria and the Steppes of Tunisia. Its southern limit is usually described as the 100 mm (4 in.) isohyet, which follows the Anti and High Atlas, the Saharan Atlas, the Aurès and Nementchas, and the Jebels Matmata, Ouderna and Nefousa.

The relationship between this last zone and the Roman frontier will become clear in what follows. South lies the Sahara, but even here, north of the Chott el Jerid, south and south-west of the Aurès and in the predesert

wadis of Tripolitania, ancient cultivation was practised in areas where today the rainfall is sometimes less than 25 mm (1 in.).

The Tell is traditionally the region of sedentary agriculture and the pre-Saharan steppe, the home of pastoralism linked to a nomadic way of life. These two have usually been portrayed as continually in conflict, but a considerable body of recent work has shown that this is far too simplistic a view. The relationship between the two ways of life was complex and at the same time both hostile and symbiotic, for the pastoralists needed the farmers with whom they could exchange animal produce in return for grain, and the farmers needed the source of extra, harvest labour which the nomads provided. In addition, much of what has been called nomadism was, in fact, semi-nomadism, that is seasonal transhumance from definite areas of winter settlement, as grazing died off, along well-established routes running mostly north and north-east into the Tell. Later in the year these routes were again followed back to the southern tribal territory. Only in some of the mountainous areas is the pattern occasionally different. Although such a way of life initially brought the tribes into conflict with Rome, there is much evidence to show that in Roman times the frontier was developed as a porous and even discontinuous membrane, designed to allow north-south movement to continue, but in a more orderly, regulated fashion. The viability of such a system is shown by the steady increase of agriculture and population which occurred in the steppe-lands, particularly in the second and early third centuries AD (Lawless, 1972 and Whittaker, 1978, with detailed discussion and full references to earlier sources).

Roman expansion in Africa was slow, and this has led some to believe that there was considerable, continuing and effective hostility to it. But when compared with other regions of the Empire there is no convincing evidence that opposition in Africa was stronger than elsewhere. Why then was the conquest so slow? The reasons can perhaps be glimpsed in contemporary accounts of the remoteness, wildness and inaccessibility of inland Africa. Strabo states that the interior afforded only a wretched subsistence as it was a rocky and sandy desert, all accounts of which were untrustworthy and incomplete. Pliny records that Rabat (Sala), on the very edge of the desert, was beset by elephants, that Mount Atlas lay in a region which was at noontide silent with the terrifying silence of the desert and by night filled with the wanton gambols of Goat-Pans and Satyrs, that some parts were forests filled with wild beasts while others were deserts abandoned to swarming serpents, that the Trogodytes had no voices, the Blemmyes no heads, their mouths and eyes being attached to their chests.

...

More seriously perhaps, it is clear that for long periods of time there was very little driving force behind the acquisition of further territory in Africa, which can only mean that once Carthage had been defeated Africa never presented a real threat or danger to Rome. Separated by the sea and vast distances of desert, isolated by its legends of remoteness, the African frontier was normally one of low priority.

As for opposition, the ease with which Caesar and the generals of Claudius, Trajan and Severus conquered additional territory, when a forward policy was in operation, shows that there was little serious military resistance. This is borne out when the size of the army is considered. First, the conquest: with the exception of Caesar, who was fighting a civil war and not just Juba I, the advancement of the frontier was achieved by a single legion, occasionally augmented, and a handful of cohorts and *alae*. Only during the revolt of Tacfarinas, the conquest of Mauretania and the Moorish War of Pius, were sizeable reinforcements brought in, and even then the resultant total force contrasts sharply with, for instance, Agricola's army in Britain (four legions and up to 50,000 auxiliaries), Trajan's Dacian and Parthian expeditionary forces, or even the 40,000 troops quartered by Marcus across the Danube amongst the Quadi and Sarmatians. Second, the size of the army of Africa. For ease of comparison the figures given by A. R. Birley (1981b) are taken, as they present a uniform assessment for the whole Empire: west of the Syrtica the mid second-century garrison of Tingitana, Caesariensis, proconsular Africa and the Numidian command has been calculated at one legion and some 24,500 auxiliaries, or a total of 30,500 men. This should be compared with the single provinces of Syria, 33,620, and Britain, 53,180 or the Rhineland-Raetian frontier, with 56,000. It is almost laughable to contrast Brigantia and lowland Scotland at the beginning of Marcus' reign, which were held, according to Frere, and excluding legionary troops, by an auxiliary force of 30,750 and had an actual frontier on the Antonine Wall of 54 km (37 miles).

Overall, in the middle of the second century the whole southern frontier of the Empire, from Rabat to Aswan, had an army of two legions and *c.* 33,000 auxiliaries, or a little over 45,000 men. At the same time the eastern frontier had 85,000, Britain and the Germanies 91,000 and the Danube 126,000. In the light of these figures it is a complete myth to suggest that the conquest of Africa was slow because of fierce resistance, that the African frontier was difficult to maintain or that the African provinces were thought to present problems of security or continual resistance.

The defeat of Carthage in 146 BC brought Rome her first territory in Africa. The actual area was kept small, some 12,800 sq. km (5,000 sq.

miles) it has been calculated, and the Numidian kings were confirmed in possession of the considerable amount of Carthaginian territory that Masinissa had annexed. No doubt mindful of that continual encroachment, the boundary of the province was defined by a ditch, the Fossa Regia, marked out under Scipio Aemilianus' supervision from near Tabarka in the north to Thenae in the south-east (fig. 10.6).

Relations with the Numidian kings were peaceful until 112 BC, when in the course of seizing Cirta, Jugurtha slaughtered Roman traders. A messy war followed. But even after Jugurtha's defeat and death very little new territory was acquired, and the Fossa Regia remained the boundary.

It was not until a century after the fall of Carthage that the first real change occurred: after his decisive victory at Thapsus in 46, Caesar annexed Numidia. The area around Cirta he gave as an independent fief to P. Sittius, his ally in war, the rest he turned into a new province (Africa Nova) to run with the older one, thereafter known as Africa Vetus. A garrison of three legions, in contrast to one in the old province, suggests that not only was the occupation to be permanent, but that Caesar entertained the possibility of further expansion. Although the civil war, and divided loyalties in Africa after Caesar's death, prevented that, triumphs were later celebrated *ex Africa* by Statilius Taurus in 34, L. Cornificius in 33 and Autronius Paetus in 28, showing that Caesar's forward policy was not totally abandoned by the more forceful proconsuls.

Among the list of provinces which took an oath to Octavian in 32 BC, were the Gauls, the Spains, but only one Africa. Some have interpreted this to mean that Numidia had been given back as a client kingdom to young Juba, the son of the old King; others that the two Africas had already been made a single province.

In 33 King Bocchus of Mauretania, the friend of Sittius and Caesar, died, and his huge kingdom was annexed. In the next few years Octavian planted a string of veteran colonies along its Mediterranean coast, with a further three beyond the Pillars of Hercules, of which two were in the Atlantic-facing Rharb plain of Morocco.

In 27 BC the situation was formalized by Augustus (as he now was): Vetus and

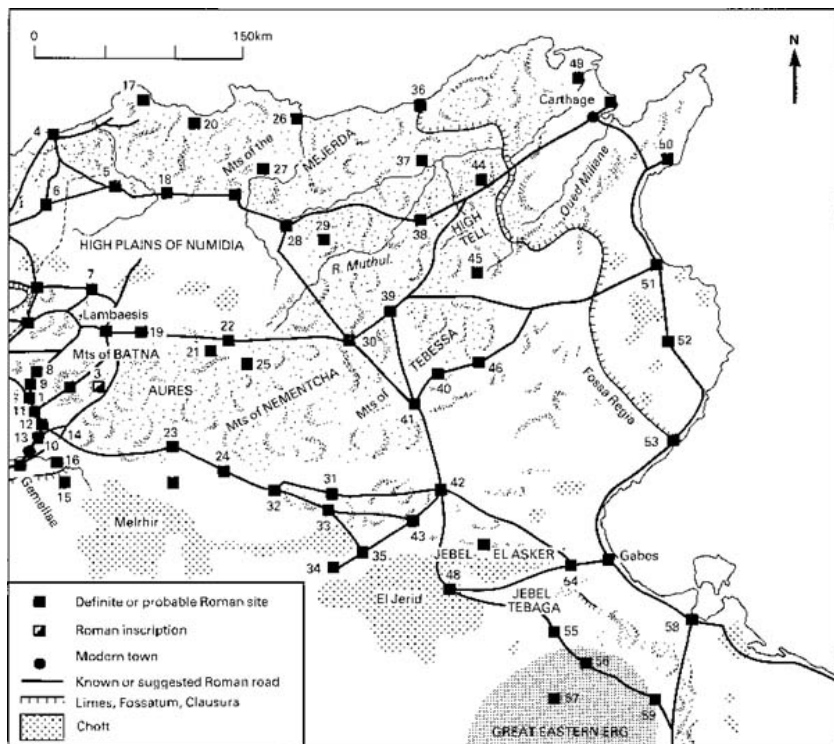


Figure 10.6 Numidia and Proconsular Africa: sites and roads

1 Oumach; 2 Tunis; 3 Tighanimine; 4 Igilgili; 5 Milev; 6 Cuicul; 7 Diana; 8 Calceus Herculis; 9 Burgus Speculatorius; 10 Aquae Herculis; 11 Mesarfelta; 12 Vescera; 13 Biskra; 14 Thabudeos; 15 Bir Djefair; 16 Bourada; 17 Chullu; 18 Cirta; 19 Timgad; 20 Rusicada; 21 Aquae Flavianae; 22 Mascula; 23 Badias; 24 Ad Medias; 25 Vazaivi; 26 Hippo Regius; 27 Calama; 28 Thubursicu Numidarum; 29 Madauros; 30 Theveste; 31 Ad Turres; 32 Ad Maiores; 33 Speculum; 34 Nepte; 35 Aquae; 36 Tabarka; 37 Bulla Regia; 38 Sicca Veneria; 39 Ammaedara; 40 Cillium; 41 Thelepte; 42 Gafsa; 43 Thiges; 44 Dugga; 45 Mactar; 46 Sufetula; 47 Bir Oum Ali; 48 Turris Tamalleni; 49 Utica; 50 Neapolis; 51 Hadrumetum; 52 Thysdrus; 53 Thenae; 54 Aquae Tacapitanae; 55 Vezereos; 56 C. Tibubuci; 57 Tisavar; 58 Gigthis; 59 Talalati

Nova became a single proconsular province, but because the Gaetulian tribes of the south were still independent, a legion and a handful of auxiliaries were quite exceptionally placed under the proconsul. So began the long association of *legio III Augusta* with Africa and, incidentally, an anomaly which in one form or another continued until the creation of a separate Numidian province by Severus.

The fact that the new African province was given to the senate shows that Augustus did not consider it to be either a strong or a problematic province, for such he kept for himself. Triumphs continued, with

Sempronius Atratinus in 21 BC and Cornelius Balbus in 19. But whether any real territorial acquisition was made is uncertain, for Tacitus states that the army continued to winter in the old province, and the activities of the proconsuls were hardly intended to rival the expeditions of Augustus' own generals. Even Balbus' spectacular conquest of the distant Garamantes received no mention in the *Res Gestae*, unlike the Aethiopian and Arabian campaigns.

At the same time Mauretania was given by national gift of the Roman People to Juba II, as a client kingdom. Thus, the old frontier on the Ampsaga, which before Masinissa's time was not only the physical boundary between Numidia and Mauretania but also a cultural frontier of considerable antiquity, was once again restored and the limits of Africa returned to what they had been in Caesar's day. To the east, the Tripolitanian emporia had passed to Rome with the rest of old Juba's lands. The hinterland of the cities, however, does not appear to have been garrisoned, beyond, possibly, a token force. Here, as in Cyrenaica, security must have been exercised by treaty relations with the coastal and hinterland tribes.

Dio tells us that Juba was given part of Gaetulia. As the Gaetuli occupied southern Numidia, it looks as if the king and not the proconsul was responsible for the southern area of the old kingdom. When a revolt broke out there Roman intervention followed, with eventual success, but no annexation occurred. At Augustus' death a road was being driven by the legion, south from its winter quarters to Gabes. De Pachterre (1916) considered the fortress to have lain at Haïdra (Ammaedara), a view which is still generally held. But Tacitus remarks that it was not until the winter of 22–23 that the army stopped wintering in the old province, and so poses a problem, for Ammaedara was not in the old province. Perhaps the fortress had been planned, but at Augustus' death the idea was dropped by Tiberius.

Trouble with the Gaetuli continued intermittently until AD 17, when the revolt of Tacfarinas broke out. In spite of its small size, the proconsular army was at first successful, until the initiative was lost to the rebels and the revolt spread. It was not until Tiberius himself appointed a commander, and temporarily transferred *legio IX Hispana* from Pannonia, that the rebels were defeated. The permanent size of the African army, however, was not altered. The cause of the war was apparently the loss of land, or curtailment of land use, suffered by the Musulamii, and is usually linked to the movement of *legio III Augusta*. But, as noted above, the legion first wintered in the area only during this war, and so its transfer may well have been a result and not a cause of the war.

In AD 37 Gaius removed the army from the control of the proconsul by appointing one of his own legates as the commander of the legion. Thereafter, the whole frontier zone of the province was directly under the emperor. But far from improving things, Tacitus says that confusion over responsibilities led to violent rivalry between proconsul and legate. Gaius next contrived the death of Juba's son and successor Ptolemy, in AD 40, and annexed Mauretania. A revolt ensued which was apparently suppressed before Gaius' own assassination occurred. A year later the Moors again rose and a longer war followed, during which first Suetonius Paullinus and then Hosidius Geta distinguished themselves, Paullinus crossing the High Atlas and Geta driving the Moors into the desert. But at this time Claudius must have been increasingly concerned with his plans for invading Britain, and his Moorish victory received little attention. It is not even known what troops were used in the conquest of Mauretania, although epigraphic evidence suggests that detachments from two legions in Spain at the time, *legio IV Macedonica* and *legio X Gemina*, may have taken part (Cagnat, 1913). Both successful generals may later have joined Claudius in Britain, along with their successor, M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, who received honours for a victory in Mauretania in 44.

About this time Mauretania was divided into two provinces, Tingitana in the west and Caesariensis in the east. Since both were placed under equestrian procurators it seems that neither was considered to be of particular military importance; a contrast with contemporary events in Britain. Next to nothing is known of the early years of either province, or their early garrisons, but legionary troops presumably remained for a short time at least, as the governor of Tingitana in AD 44–5 held his command *pro legato*. During the civil war Luceius Albinus, who was given control of both provinces by Galba, had a total force of five *alae* and nineteen cohorts, or roughly the same as Raetia and Noricum together, at a slightly later date.

In Tingitana effective Roman control was limited to the area about the straits, the Atlantic coastal plain, or Rharb, as far south as Rabat, and the fertile Tell area north of the Middle Atlas, as far east as Volubilis ([fig. 10.7](#)). The Atlas ranges themselves were never held, nor was much of the equally mountainous Riff to the north and east, and except in exceptional circumstances there was no land communication with Caesariensis. Much discussion of this question has taken place, but it is clear that the only route, the Taza corridor and lower Moulouya valley, was totally free from Roman posts (Euzennat, 1978, for full discussion).

In Caesariensis the century between Bocchus' death and Nero's

assassination saw very little advance (fig. 10.8). As first established, the province remained essentially the coastal plain with its cities. The rugged, densely-forested and thinly-populated Dahra, Mitidjien and Kabylie massifs, with their heavy rainfall and high humidity, did not appeal and very few inland settlements were founded. The only direction in which any real

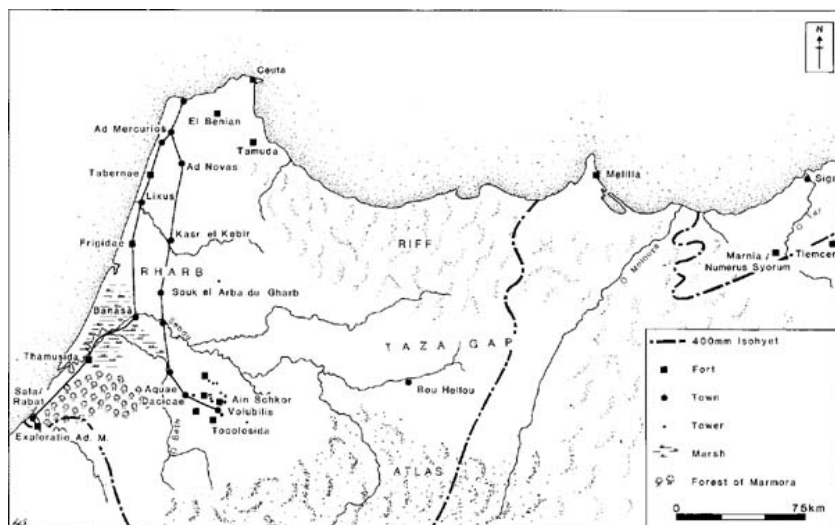


Figure 10.7 Tingitana: sites, roads and rainfall

inland advances did take place was south of Tipasa, where in addition to the early foundations of Zucchabar and Aquae Calidae, Oppidum Novum was planted under Claudius in the attractive and fertile Chélif valley.

In a comparable period of time, from the establishment of proconsular Africa to the early years of Vespasian, proconsular Africa had hardly grown either. The legion had moved to Ammaedara and the Musulamii had been controlled, but beyond Ammaedara, and south of Madauros and Cirta, the Gaetulian tribes were still free to range. In contrast, the half century of Flavian and Trajanic rule saw a new departure: the steady advance of the frontier. About AD 75 the legion was again moved, this time to Tébessa (Theveste), a significant advance which gave it direct access to the Tell region north of the Aurès. Military posts were quickly established at Mascula, Aquae Flavianaes and Vazaïvi, and in 81 a detachment of the legion built the first fort at Lambaesis (fig. 10.9A). In 75 Banasa chose as patron Sextius Sentius Caecilianus, who had been made responsible by Vespasian for redefining boundaries in Africa, and then for setting in order both provinces of Mauretania (*leg. Aug. pro pr. ordinandae utriusq.*

Mauretaniae) after the shortcomings of Vitellius' administration. A little later Velius Rufus is recorded as *dux* of the African and Mauretanian armies, implying synchronized activity by the two forces. The wording *ad nationes quae sunt in Mauretania conprimendas* (in order that tribes in Mauretania should be kept in check) suggests that he was concerned with regulating the free-ranging movement of peoples on the Mauretanian–African boundary,

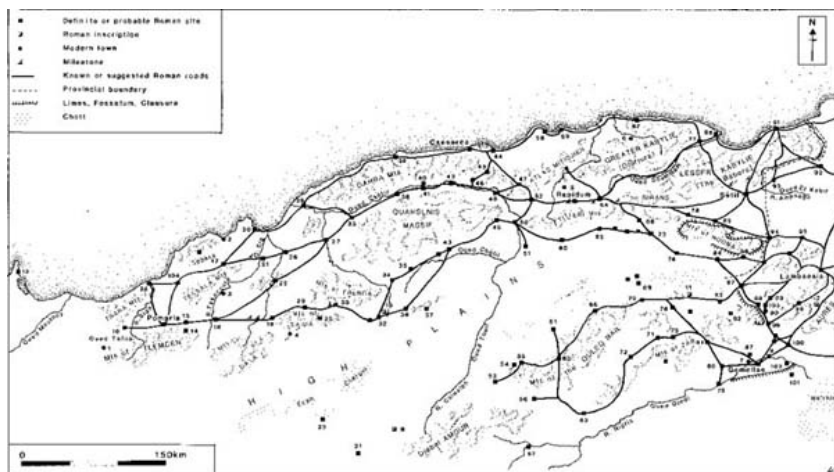


Figure 10.8 Caesariensis: sites and roads

1 Oujda; 2 Oran; 3 Sidi Bel Abbes; 4 Saïda; 5 Beni-Slimane; 6 Tizi Ouzou; 7 Ourella; 8 Oumach; 9 Agneb; 10 Oppidum; 11 Zireg; 12 Tighanimine; 13 Rusaddir; 14 Aïn Bent Soltane; 15 Altava; 16 Numerus Syrorum; 17 Regiae; 18 Kaputtasaccura; 19 Lucu; 20 Portus Magnus; 21 Tasaccura; 22 Aquae Sirenses; 23 El Khadra; 24 Siga; 25 Aïn Balloul; 26 Castra Nova; 27 Mina; 28 Quiza; 29 Ala Miliaria; 30 Cohors Breucorum; 31 El Bayadh; 32 Aïoun Sbiba; 33 Gadaum Castra; 34 Tiaret; 35 Columnata; 36 Temardjanet; 37 Aïn Benia; 38 Castellum Tingitanum; 39 Cartennas; 40 Tigava; 41 Tigava Castra; 42 Oppidum Novum; 43 Aïn Toukria; 44 Tipasa; 45 Aquae Calidae; 46 Zucchabar; 47 Lambdaia; 48 Sufasar; 49 Hiberna Alae Sebastenae; 50 Boghar; 51 Boughezoul; 52 Thanaramusa Castra; 53 Zenina; 54 Charef; 55 Aïn El Hammam; 56 Tadmit; 57 Laghouat; 58 Icosium, Algiers; 59 Rusguniae; 60 Aïn Touta; 61 Korirein; 62 Djelfa; 63 Castellum Dimmidi; 64 Auzia; 65 Aïn Grimidi; 66 Medjedel; 67 Rusuccuru; 68 Tatilti; 69 El Guelaa; 70 Bou Saada; 71 El Gahra; 72 Aïn Rich; 73 Aras; 74 Zabi; 75 Bou Mellal; 76 Aïn Mekrenza; 77 Tubusuctu; 78 Equizeto; 79 Ouled Djellal; 80 Doucen; 81 Asum, Sadouri; 82 Centenarium Aqua Viva; 83 Zebaret; 84 Macri; 85 Thamallula; 86 Saldae; 87 Tolga; 88 Seba Mgata; 89 Calceus Herculis; 90 Aquae Herculis; 91 Igilgili; 92 Milev; 93 Cuicul; 94 Zaraï; 95 Diana; 96 Cellas; 97 Thubunae; 98 Menaa; 99 Mesarfelta; 100 Thabudeos; 101 Bir Djefeir; 102 Bourada; 103 Burgus Speculatorius; 104 Aïn-Temouchent

where an extremely important transhumance route is known to have lain.

Under Trajan the trunk road north of the Aurès was developed. Theveste

became a colony, showing that the legion was again moved, although when and where is by no means certain (p. 248 below), and a further colony was planted at Timgad, 150 km (93 miles) further west. *Municipia* were established at Mascula and Diana. To the south, a road from Gabes was driven west along the flanks of the Aurès at least as far as Ad Maiores (AD 104–5, [fig. 10.11](#)). It has been argued that as part of this exercise lengths of *clausura* were constructed across gaps in Jebel el Asker, north of the Chott el Jerid, on the grounds of their similarity to such works as Hadrian's Wall in Britain (Trousset, 1974). On the other hand, such features are highly uncharacteristic of Trajanic thinking elsewhere and it is perhaps rash to suggest such a date, since they would fit the mentality of Hadrian, or a later age, much better.

How far was the road taken beyond Ad Maiores? Cagnat (1913), long ago, suggested that it carried on to Vescera, Calceus Herculis and Thubunae. This would be a considerable advance, and at a time when the German and British frontiers had virtually been closed down in favour of advances in Dacia and the east. The only alternative, however, is to attribute it to Hadrian, whose frontier works run from Thubunae to Mesarfelta, and south of Gemellae. Yet such an advance, of about 200 km (124 miles), would be totally at variance with Hadrianic policy on every other frontier of the Empire. To Trajan, then, must go the credit for taking the African-Numidian frontier to its logical conclusion. This had the advantage of not only controlling the Biskra gap, through the Saharan Atlas, but also of reaching the actual edge of the desert. The frontier had reached its logical limit in the south. To the west, however, it had not yet found a matching limit, and was forced to take an arbitrary line, cutting across the grain of the country and the seasonal movement of tribes from the Hodna to the Plains of Cons tan tine.

The same argument must hold for Caesariensis as holds for Africa. By the death of Trajan the frontier had been pushed south of Oued Soummam and the Beni-Slimane plain, to Auzia and the skirts of the Titteri range, thence via Sufasar to the Chélif Valley. Further west Trajanic foundations are known at Tasaccura and Regiae, linking the Chélif line with Siga at the mouth of Oued Tafna. Here no natural division is exploited, as the southern limit of the Tell had not yet been reached, but the line took advantage of the Chélif and the Plain of Oran, while remaining clear of the Tell Atlas.

Hadrian's reign marks a decisive change of pace on the African frontier, as elsewhere, with the introduction of running barriers ([figs 10.8 and 10.10](#)). But Hadrian also constructed a number of new forts, which probably transformed the comparatively scattered Trajanic outpost-network

into a regular frontier system. The most easterly running barrier was for long thought to be some 70 km (44 miles) of ditch constructed from east to west of Speculum (east of Ad Maiores). But Troussel (1980a) has recently studied part of it and come to the convincing conclusion that it was, in fact, a road.

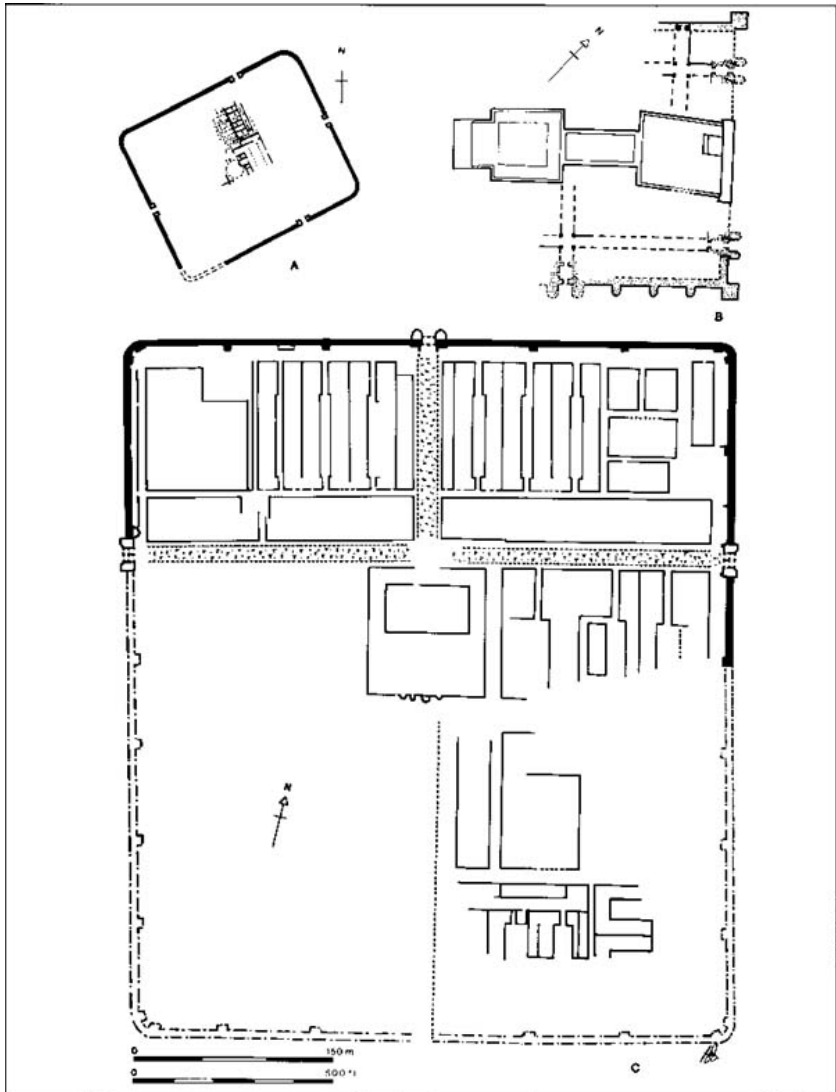


Figure 10.9 Legionary fortresses: (A) Lambaesis 'East' (*after Janon*); (B) the late fortress at Luxor; (C) Lambaesis (*after Cagnat*)

Whether free-standing towers existed in this sector is not known, although

Baradez suggested that they might yet be found.

The sector which has received the most attention is that which is known locally as the *Seguia bent el Krass* (fig. 10.10A,G). This was a ditch fronting what had been a mud-brick wall, running for 60 km (37 miles) through an area of sparse winter grazing south of Oued Djedi. Baradez suggested that there had been a regular system of gateways at mile intervals, with a single tower placed midway between each pair of gates. The example of a gateway which he published (fig. 10.10) was a simple passageway between two guardchambers, with doors front and back, and a causeway across the ditch. Although Guey (1938) thought the whole system to have been of fourth-century date, Baradez' finds of pottery and coins proved the gates and towers to be Hadrianic foundations. The regularity of the system, however, is not so certain, for the gateways are difficult to see on the ground and there are considerably more towers than Baradez' account suggests, some on or very close to the wall, others, sometimes in groups, a short distance from it. Baradez' 'blueprint' may not have been so regular, and was definitely modified with the passage of time. Behind the line lay a scatter of small posts and isolated buildings, mostly late when they are datable, and the major fort of Gemellae, situated on the banks of Oued Djedi. This was a large fort, 2.9 ha (7¼ acres) in size (fig. 10.11C) and built of mud bricks in the same style as the wall. Inscriptions date its first garrison, an equitate cohort, to AD 125–6.

The purpose of this barrier must have been to cover what today is a region of comparatively abundant water sources and palm groves lying around Ourella and Oumach and stretching from west of Tolga as far east as Biskra. That the *limes* was for regulation, and not total exclusion, is borne out by its gateways and the absence of any continuous rearward barrier similar to the British Vallum, with its very limited, heavily controlled crossing points. To the east the *Seguia* ends on the Oued Djedi, with Thabudeos covering the gap between it and the Aurès. To the west the gap between the end of the barrier and the next sector, at Mesarfelta, could have been covered by posts at Ouled Djellal (Baradez, 1949, 124) and Doucen, where Baradez records a total of four separate forts. Such a system would easily control the limited number of watering points on the western approach to Tolga, and as far north as the Zab mountains. The area north of Djebel ben Rhezal would have been watched from Mesarfelta itself.

The Mesarfelta sector (fig. 10.10B,C,D,F) consists of *c.* 45 km (28 miles) of either mound or wall, with a ditch and numerous towers. These last, and the duplication of the barrier itself at Mesarfelta, must indicate changes of plan or alterations during a long life. This sector provides a

control where the frontier crosses the broken spurs of the Saharan Atlas and it would be easy to slip past unnoticed to Calceus. Baradez' published sections show a narrowish wall with ditch, of varying overall widths. Towers and gateways similar to those just described occur here, too.

North of Djebel Metlili the *fossatum* runs out into the plain and appears to end

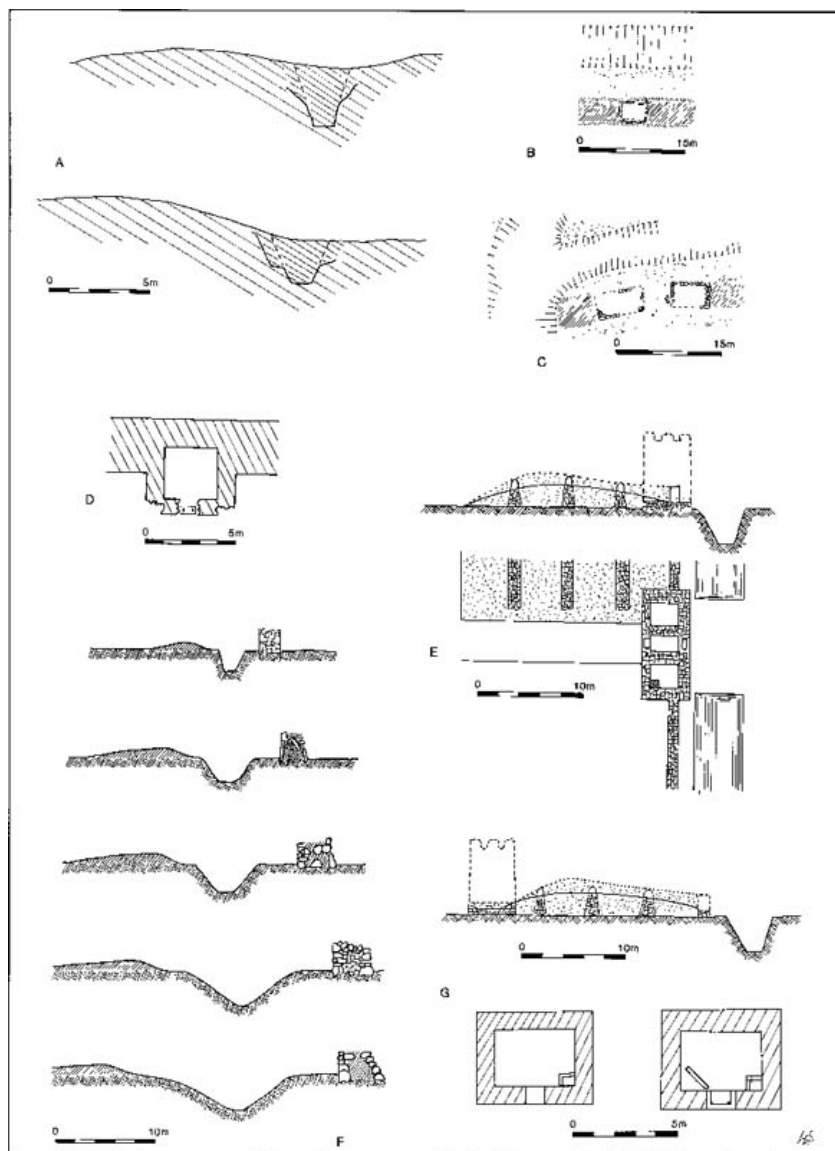


Figure 10.10 Frontier works: (A) Gemellae sector ditch (after Guey); (B,C,D)

Mesarfelta sector, *limes*, towers and (?) gate (*after Jones and Mattingly, and Baradez*); (E) Gemellae sector gate (*after Baradez*); (F) Mesarfelta sector wall and ditch (*after Baradez*); (G) Gemellae sector rear towers (*after Baradez*)

close to Tobna (Thubunae), the plain itself continuing as far north as the Hodna mountains. Any movement of people in this area could easily be seen and controlled from Thubunae, Cellas and Macri, or from Zarái, where the well-known customs tariff was found (*CIL*, VIII, 4508).

The third sector of *fossatum* is some 140 km (87 miles) long and all but encircles a portion of the Hodna Mountains. This length has been least studied of all and begs more questions than any of the others. If Baradez' map (1959) is to be believed it is a single-period construction running around and through the mountains, and apparently blocking off the approaches to Sétif from the south.

Seen together these lengths of *fossatum* were clearly never designed to form a preclusive frontier, but rather to control and channel north-east south-west seasonal transhumance from the Hodna area to the Plains of Constantine (Berthier, 1968).

The Hodna sector just described lies in Caesariensis. Elsewhere in that province the frontier was an open road running via Auzia to the Chélif. As suggested above, this line had been created in Trajanic times, but under Hadrian further forts were added, including Praesidium Sufative at Albulae, in AD 119, and Rapidum ([fig. 10.11G](#)) and Thanaramusa Castra, in 122. Towers may have been constructed along part of the road, for later in the century 'old towers' were rebuilt when new ones were added, in the Auzia-Rapidum sector. The original structures may have been as early as Hadrian.

Trouble occurred in the province, which is usually dated to the early part of Hadrian's reign, when the Baquates attacked Cartennas. Thereafter, the tribe is found along the Middle Atlas in Tingitana, where it might already have been situated at the time of its sally into central Caesariensis.

Conditions in Tingitana appear to have been peaceful. A whole series of inscriptions from Volubilis records solemn treaties with the Baquates, from the time of Marcus onwards, preceded by a simple dedication set up to Pius by one Aeiuis Tuccuda, *princeps* of the tribe. His name suggests a grant of citizenship under Hadrian. Since before the end of the first century Volubilis itself had been spreading far beyond its walls, but as new defences were not provided until AD 168, it is clear that there was no feeling of insecurity: the fort of Aïn Schkor, 3 km (2 miles) to the north, must have provided sufficient protection. On the other hand, diplomas suggest that the garrison of the province was increased between 109 and 122 by the addition of six extra auxiliary regiments, perhaps indicating that

Trajan or Hadrian considered the long open frontier between Sala and Volubilis, and especially between Volubilis and Tingi, needed further protection. No sign of a regular series of forts or towers has been found, so treaty relations with the local tribes were probably an important part of frontier peace and security.

On 1 July AD 128 Hadrian reviewed the army of Africa at Lambaesis, to which the legion had recently been moved (fig. 10.9C). Parts of his address have survived (*CIL*, VIII, 2532 and 18042), carved on the base of a monument which stood in the centre of the so-called camp of the auxiliaries, to the west of the legionary fortress (fig. 10.11D).

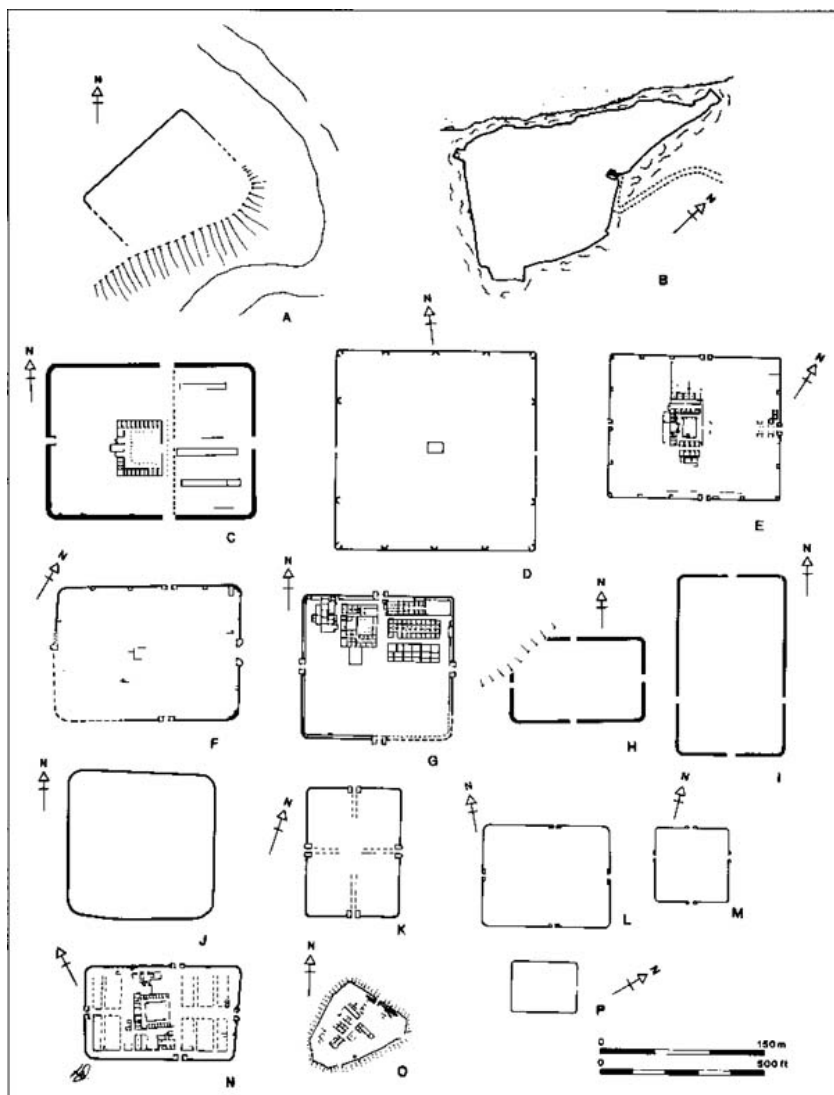


Figure 10.11 Auxiliary forts: (A) Aïn el Hammam (*after Jones*); (B) Primis, Qasr Ibrim (*after Adams et al.*); (C) Gemellae (*after Fentress*); (D) Lambaesis, 'Camp of the auxiliaries' (*after le Bohec*); (E) Thamusida (*after Rebuffat*); (F) Gheria el Garbia (*after Jones*); (G) Rapidum (*after Christofle*); (H) Djebel Mellah (*after Fentress*); (I) Ad Maiores (*after Fentress*); (J) Tocolosida (*after Euzennat*); (K) Ausum; (L) Remada (*after Euzennat*); (M) Ras el Aïn (*after Euzennat*); (N) Bu Ngem (*after Rebuffat*); (O) Dimmidi (*after Picard*); (P) Vezereos (*after Euzennat*)

The legion, Hadrian tells us, had in his own memory moved twice and built a fortress on each occasion. Since the second move was obviously to Lambaesis, a short time before 128, the first move must have been some

time in the reign of Trajan, and Syme has suggested earlier rather than later. No fortress of that date has yet been found and the legion may have been split, for Hadrian noted that many widely scattered posts kept it separated. One cohort of the legion was also, by annual rote, on duty with the proconsul, and two years earlier a cohort and four men from each century had been sent to a sister *legio III*. In spite of the scattered state of the legion, and the African army, it was still felt to be strong enough to release a detachment for service in the east.

The reign of Pius was dominated in Africa by the Moorish War, when, according to Pausanias, independent nomadic tribes began an unprovoked attack, and were in return driven from their country and forced to flee as far as Mount Atlas. This must have called for extraordinary measures, and it has been suggested that the senatorial governor Uttedius Honoratus was given charge of both Mauretaniae at the same time. Such a command would certainly have facilitated the defeat of the insurgents, but it is not actually attested in any source. We do know of the transfer into Caesariensis and Tingitana of legionary and auxiliary vexillations from Spain, and several northern provinces; but when the war was over these returned, leaving the provincial armies much as they had been before the war began; and not too long afterwards troops from Africa were sent to assist in Dacia.

Minor increases in defence did occur: in Tingitana Sala received walls, but Volubilis remained as before, largely unprotected. In Caesariensis the walls of Tipasa are dated to AD 146–7, on the strength of a fragmentary inscription from a minor gateway. A fort was built near Tigava at the same date, or perhaps a little earlier, but there is little sign of any change along the frontier of the province, or of any departure from the *limes*.

In Africa, on the other hand, there was a conspicuous change. The famous inscription of a detachment of *legio VI Ferrata*, road building at Tighanimine in the central Aurès defile in AD 145, shows that there was no trouble there during the Moorish War. Then, in 148–9, a fort was constructed near Medjedel, on the northern slopes of the Ouled Nail mountains, some 150 km (93 miles) beyond the *limes* and about 115 km (72 miles) south of Auzia and the frontier of Caesariensis. The fact that such a fort could not have been placed there in splendid isolation is obvious: what is not known is where its companions lay. Doucen has already been mentioned, but is still far too distant, and although Baradez (1949) talks of forts lying between Doucen and Sadouri (Ausum) he gives no further information. El Gahra is 65 km (40 miles) further on, but still 75 km (47 miles) from Medjedel, and nothing is known about it in Antonine times. Zabi, too, is 100 km (62 miles) away; so the question remains

unanswered. What is of major importance, however, is that this advance marks the first departure from the Hadrianic system.

In the reign of Marcus Aurelius a further innovation occurred. An inscription (*CIL*, VIII, 21567), dated to AD 174, was set up by a mixed force of cavalry at Agneb, or Agueneb, on the northern edge of Djebel Amour, some 400 km (250 miles) beyond the African frontier. No trace of a fort has yet been found, although the troops were there long enough for a decurion to receive notice of promotion. The stone must indicate a mobile column patrolling tribal territory well down the Saharan Atlas (fig. 10.8, 9). This control, far beyond the *limes*, recalls the *loca* which Marcus imposed on the Marcomanni and Sarmatians beyond the Danube. These were places where tribal congregation and markets were licensed on fixed days, under regular Roman supervision. The *loca* which the *Ravenna Cosmography* lists in northern Britain are usually attributed to a later period, but there is no reason why they, too, could not have been instituted by Marcus, as an effective way of controlling the tribes beyond the frontier after the withdrawal from lowland Scotland. Seen in this light, the Agneb patrol indicates effective tribal regulation by supervision of the southern Atlas as well as the northern Tell ranges.

In Tingitana, the policy of tribal alliances was continued by means of a treaty between the Macenites and Baquates, and the emperor's procurator. Further north, a similar relationship with a local tribe is suggested by the granting of citizenship in AD 168 and 177 to two important members of the Zegrenses, as recorded at Banasa. However, some possible indications of insecurity are also to be found. In 168–9 Volubilis, at last, received a magnificent new circuit of walls, complete with towers and elaborate gates, while some 4.5 km (23/4 miles) to the south, at Tocolosida (fig. 10.11 J), a fort was built on the site of a small settlement destroyed about the middle of the century. To the north of Volubilis the fort of Aïn Schkor was also destroyed 'about the middle of the century' and a new one built on the site. Volubilis itself, however, has produced no signs of damage.

As the century progressed, a network of forts and towers was developed in the vicinity of Volubilis and Aquae Dacicae, until a regular 7 to 9 Roman-mile mesh stretched from Oued Beth as far east as Volubilis. To the north, Thamusida (figs 10.7 and 10.11 E) received a fort and, shortly before the start of the third century, a garrison was placed at Banasa. On the coast Sala, already walled, was reinforced with a fort, while 6 km (33/4 miles) to the south a ditch was dug for some 11 km (63/4 miles), from the Atlantic to Oued Bou Regreg, completely shutting off the city. The ditch was complemented here and there by a wall (fig. 10.12A,B), but its date is still

no more closely assignable than to the second century (Euzennat, 1977a). Such was the southern defence of the province (fig. 10.7).

To the east no comparable works are known, although forts have been identified at Souk el Arba du Gharb, Tamuda and possibly at Kasr el Kebir. The Riff mountains remained almost totally unpenetrated and, under Marcus, sufficiently hostile for their inhabitants to cross the straits and devastate considerable areas of Spain, either in the late AD 160s or 172–3. Marcus restored order, but Commodus, too, is attributed with further action against the Moors, and the reference in the *Historia Augusta* makes best sense if it is taken to mean Moors outside the province. At the same time another reference could be interpreted as referring to successful military action in the mountains on the African side of the Mediterranean. To the south, the Baquates had a new chief, Aurelius Canartha, installed as a client ruler by the *procurator*.

In Caesariensis, Commodus reinforced the security of the province, early in his reign, by the provision of towers along the frontier road, both in the vicinity of Aïn Temouchent (Albulae) and at the other end of the province, between Auzia and Rapidum, where old towers were repaired and new ones added.

During the first and second centuries areas of the provinces, which in Tacitus' words were *solitudines Africae*, became populous and agriculturally prosperous. Hadrianic frontier policy had been to encourage development right up to the actual *limes*. As a result population and prosperity had so increased that it was now necessary to reinforce the policing of both the frontier itself and the land behind, particularly on account of the extremely porous nature of the African *limes*. Hence the provision of new watchtowers, which were designed for latitudinal observation along the line of the frontier and the regulation of those crossing it. Hence also the establishment of a *burgus speculatorius*, a police post for maintaining order and security between two roads (*inter duas vias ad salutem commeantium nova tutela constitui*) on the track between Calceus and Mesarfelta.

East again, in Tripolitania (fig. 10.13), a new fort was built on the escarpment road at Vezereos, some 80 km (50 miles) south-east of Turrus Tamalleni, and another in the same sector, at Tisavar. Both these fortlets were far too small to be considered anything other than police posts (0.32 and 0.12 ha, 3/4 and 1/4 acres), but Tisavar is unusual in that it lay beyond the frontier line, a rarity amongst Commodan-date foundations. Elsewhere in the Empire, similar control of frontiers by the building or rebuilding of forts and *burgi* against robbers and no-goods (*latrunculi*), is recorded under

Commodus, providing 'supervision and regulation of traffic across the border' (Mócsy), rather than the fortification of the frontier against increasing barbarian attacks. So seen, Commodus was clearly not the innovator of a new frontier policy which some have thought him to have been, but rather a conformer to the Hadrianic concept.

This concept was dramatically reversed by the African emperor Septimius Severus, under whom a considerable territorial advance was made. At the same time it is clear that a fuller understanding of the requirements for effective frontier control is to be seen in his system.

In Tripolitania, agricultural development of the Gebel escarpment and the predesert wadi systems of the Sofeggin and Zemzem, had gone on apace since the mid-first century AD. The production of olives, cereals and stock was developed by a steadily growing population, which has traditionally been interpreted as Roman settler exploitation of the land. However, as far as can be seen, neither here nor elsewhere on the African

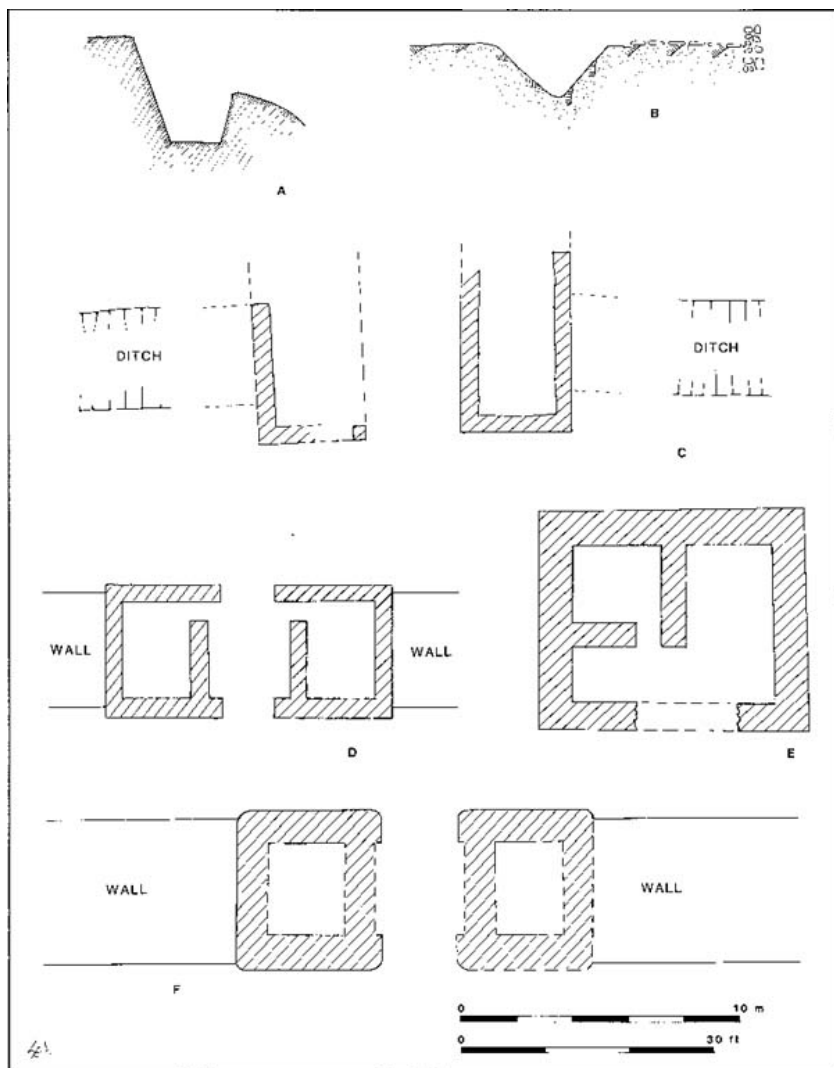


Figure 10.12 Frontier works: (A,B) Sala sector ditch (after Rowland-Mareschal and Euzennat); (C) Jebel Tebaga clausura gate (after Troussel); (D) *limes Tripolitanus* gate at Oued Skiffa (after Blanchet); (E,F) Hadd Hajar clausura watchtower and gate (after Brogan)

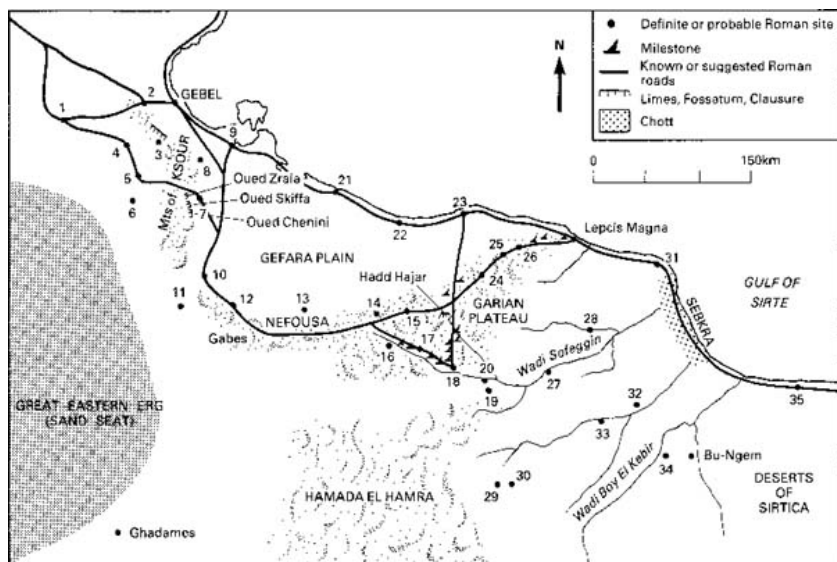


Figure 10.13 Tripolitania: sites and roads

- 1 Turris Tamalleni; 2 Aquae Tacapitanae; 3 Henchir Bel Aid; 4 Vezereos; 5 C. Tibubuci; 6 Tisavar; 7 Talalati; 8 Henchir Gueciret; 9 Gigthis; 10 Tillibar Remada; 11 Si-Aoun; 12 Dehibat; 13 Gasr Tigi; 14 Tentheos; 15 Auru; 16 Gasr Duib; 17 Gasr Uames; 18 Mizda; 19 Bir ed-Dreder; 20 Schedewa; 21 Pisida; 22 Sabratha; 23 Oea, Tripoli; 24 Thenadassa (Ain Wif); 25 Tarhuna; 26 Mesphe; 27 Schmeck; 28 Gasr Bularkan; 29 Gherial-Gharbia; 30 Gherial Schergia; 31 Tubactis; 32 Faschia; 33 Ghirza; 34 Gasr Zerzi; 35 Sirte

frontier can it be shown to have been predominantly Roman colonists (traditionally ‘*limitanei*’ or soldier-farmers) who carried this out. On the contrary, it increasingly appears to have been the local native population. The Tripolitanian zone of agriculture was now given some protection by the building of a screen of forts, placed on the main routes south (fig. 10.13). The major oases of Bu Ngem and Gheria el Gharbia received forts for detachments of *legio III Augusta*. Minor posts were placed at Gasr Zerzi and Gheria es Schergia on by-pass routes. These effectively controlled the south and southeastern approaches to the area, the absolutely waterless Hamada el Hamra securing the south-west, beyond which the even more remote oasis of Ghadames also received a fort. Bu Ngem (AD 201, fig. 10.11N), certainly, and Gheria (fig. 10.11F), most likely, can be attributed to Quintus Anicius Faustus, who was given command of the legion in AD 197–201. Ghadames very likely dates to the same legate. North of these forts, on the escarpment road, an additional small outpost was placed at Si Aoun in AD 198,



Figure 10.14 Numidia and the frontier command of Anicius Faustus

while Vezereos was virtually rebuilt in 201. Well to the east, the road station of Aïn Wif (Thenadassa) was also manned by the legion.

West of the Gemellae and Mesarfelta *limes* sectors, the Antonine ‘outpost’ zone was now hugely advanced by a network of forts, some small in size, extending by way of el Gahra and Aïn Rich to Castellum Dimmidi (AD 198, [fig. 10.11O](#)), and by way of Medjedel to Aïn el Hammam ([fig. 10.11A](#)), where a fragmentary inscription could be of Severan date. Other parts of the same system, but not closely datable, lie at Bou Saada, el Guelaa, Korirein, Djelfa, Tadmit and Zenina. The whole may even have extended west of Agneb, for Roman remains have been recorded at el Bayadh (ex Géryville) and el Khadra. This network ensured a permanent control of the Saharan Atlas along the southern edge of the High Plains ([figs 10.5 and 14](#)).

The smallness of garrisons (handfuls of legionaries and vexillations of *numeri*), the mixture of troops (legionaries and auxiliaries, infantry and cavalry) and the distances between posts (sometimes well over 50 km, 30 miles) stand out, and stress the same points: considerable Roman self-confidence, and little tribal opposition. The command of Faustus must have been stretched to its limits; in fact a detachment of *legio III Gallica* collaborated with *legio III Augusta*, reversing the Hadrianic situation, and long ago Carcopino (1925) pointed out the increased use of Syrian units. The overall distances Faustus had to control are staggering: from Bu Ngem via Ghadames, Tisavar and Gemellae to Dimmidi, by the straightest course, is over 1500 km (nearly 1,000 miles), the distance from the Cyrenaican frontier to el Khadra, measured the same way, is something like 2200 km

(1,360 miles). These are direct distances; the army had a considerably greater area to control. By comparison, the Danube frontier, at about the same overall length, comprised six provinces and had a garrison of ten legions at this time. There was nothing like Faustus' command anywhere in the Empire, and even when Severus raised Numidia to the rank of a full province, most probably with Faustus as its first governor, there was no real change in the situation, nor increase in the size of the army.

The other half of Severus' policy was an advance in *Caesariensis* (fig. 10.8). This took the frontier to the southern edge of the Tell, with the creation of a new frontier line (*Nova Praetentura*) beyond the Titteri-Bibans ranges in the east, and the Ouarsenis and Frenda mountains in the west. Some control was exercised over the Saïda mountains, but the Daya and Tlemcen ranges seem to have been excluded. In AD 198, under the *procurator* Gaius Octavius Pudens, the eastern advanced posts of Tatilti, Grimidi and the road to Boghar were built, as well as a road from Sétif to Auzia. In 201 Publius Aelius Peregrinus added Aras and the winter quarters of the *ala Sebastena* in the southwest Ouarsenis, as well as the length of road, with its forts, from Cohors Breucorum to Kaputtasaccura, or possibly Altava. Four milestones actually refer to this as a *Nova Praetentura*. Other posts of Severan date fill the gaps, extending the road as far west as Maghnia (Lalla Marnia, Numerus Syrorum) on the Oued Tafna. Aïn Balloul, Aïn Benia and Ferme Romanette have been interpreted as outposts in the plains although the published plans of these sites raise serious questions as to their real nature (Benseddik, 1979?). This new line represents the advance of the old porous frontier, already discussed above (p. 244), not the institution of a new, preclusive barrier, as Gsell thought, and recently Rachet and Benabou have again claimed.

The function of a 'double frontier' of this sort has only slowly been recognized (Picard, 1947). The area between the *limes* of *Caesariensis* and the advance posts in the Saharan Atlas is what Despois

calls the 'Waiting Zone' for nomadic and semi-nomadic movements between early summer, when there is sufficient grazing in the zone to support flocks while harvest labour filters northwards, and June to August, when it becomes essential to get the flocks and herds northwards to pasture on the stubble ... the prime function of the inner line was to control the pastoralists in the 'Waiting Zone' and regulate the very important matter of the timing of their entrance and exits from the zone - not too early (especially in bad years) to trample the crops with their herds, but early enough to provide the harvest labour that was hired in

the southern marches of the province (Whittaker, 1978, 349–50).

To the east the older, Hadrianic *limes* served the same function of a rear line, and recently Troussset (1974) has argued for the same arrangement in southern Tunisia. In Tripolitania, by contrast, there is less evidence for similarly large-scale seasonal movement, and as the predesert there is too arid to provide a comparable waiting zone, and no Tell lay to the north, the same system does not seem to have existed.

There is little indication of any contemporary advance in Tingitana. The existing system of forts and posts continued to protect the cities, especially Volubilis which was the seat of some at least of the procurators. To have attempted to advance to the limits of the Tell would have meant taking in extensive areas of the Middle Atlas and pushing into the Riff. Neither was practical and neither was attempted.

One area which has only been mentioned in passing is the 360 km (220 miles) of territory between Volubilis and Numerus Syrorum (fig. 10.5). Under Severus it appears that there may have been serious consideration given to annexing it. The procurators Haius Diadumenianus (AD 202–5) and Sallustius Macrinianus (probably his immediate successor) are attested as holding command in both provinces at the same time, an exceptional state of affairs. Only during the civil war after Nero's death, and under Vespasian, is it known for certain of others holding a similar command. Now, after the work of Faustus in Numidia and Pudens and Peregrinus in Caesariensis, was just the moment when the emperor could have decided to close the gap between the two Mauretanas. But the terrain and the low rainfall of the Moulouya valley, not to mention the independence of the Riff tribes, must have counselled against it. A proclamation of Roman Victory, however, was set up on a monument near Bou Hellou, 90 km (56 miles) east of Volubilis, and fragments of what was possibly another such inscription have been found at Numerus Syrorum in Caesariensis.

The generally peaceful state of the Sahara, which had existed during the reign of Severus, continued under his immediate successors. Under Caracalla milestones indicate work on the Caesariensis road and another *burgus speculatorius* was built south of el Kantara. For the first time, in the Antonine Itinerary, the escarpment or Gebel road (fig. 10.13) is described as following the *limes* of Tripolitania. Its course is given from Gabes via Turris Tamalleni to Lepcis, with the road stations listed, eighteen of which lie between Turris and Lepcis. Additionally, milestones of Caracalla record that another road ran from Tripoli to Mizda, beyond the *limes*, where it was met by a branch from the *limes* road running along the upper Sofeggin.

Here too, milestones record Caracalla.

In Tingitana peaceful treaty relations with the Baquates continued. It has been observed that under Severus Alexander the increasing use of Syrian and other Eastern troops reached a peak with the augmentation or replacement of legionary garrisons by Palmyrenés (Picard, 1947). Another innovation which has been attributed to the same emperor was the introduction of veteran soldier-settlers (*limitanei*) into the farms and settlements of the frontier zone, in return for their service as frontier guards (Cagnat, 1913). Baradez and Goodchild were strong exponents of this view, which is still found, for example, in Rachet. But van Berchem and, overwhelmingly, Jones (1973) have questioned it, convincingly showing that the *limitanei* were no other than the normal, late, frontier troops, and not a peasant militia. The *Historia Augusta's* account is a fabrication. The settlements around frontier and rearward forts, on the other hand, had certainly been prospering, and as a whole continued to do so during the third and fourth centuries (Daniels, 1983). [Figures 10.15](#) and [10.16](#) compare the size of successful *vici* with other settlements.

It has been suggested that a subtle change occurred after the succession of Severus Alexander. E. Birley (1950) pointed out that from his time onwards the status of the Numidian command dropped, so that only second-raters were appointed to the post. The importance of the legion, too, seems to have diminished with the increase in eastern troops. Having reached its peak under the African Severus, Numidia appears to have lost status under his Syrian successors.

The real crisis came shortly after the assassination of Severus Alexander in AD 235. Maximinus Thrax restored the status of the legion, and some at least of the frontier forts received legionaries again. But this uncouth and ruthless soldier was not popular with the Senate, the supporters of Alexander, or the class of landowners on whom his extortions fell most heavily and a revolt occurred at Thysdrus, in 238, which raised Gordian I to the purple. However, Capellianus, the governor of Numidia, easily destroyed the rebels with the aid of the legion and some provincial cavalry, and sacked various cities, including Carthage. Thrax himself was killed by his own troops shortly after, and the youngest Gordian became emperor. Perhaps in a bid to win favour Maximinus' name was removed from various inscriptions by the legion, but it was not enough. The legion was disbanded.

The strain on manpower must now have become acute, and it has been suggested that all forts beyond el Gahra had to be abandoned, while those still held were again garrisoned by Palmyrenes. Carcopino noted that only

Palmyrenes are recorded on inscriptions between AD 238 and 253. The name of the legion was everywhere obliterated. But, as actual evidence for abandonment has so far been recovered from only one site, Castellum Dimmidi, it is perhaps a little premature to see wholesale withdrawal. To the rear, a new fort was built at Doucen in AD 242, and another at Ausum in 247, unless the latter was the rebuilding of a Severan foundation (fig. 10.11K). At least part of the Severan system was permanently retained along a line from Oued Djedi through Doucen, Ausum, el Gahra and Medjedel (fig. 10.8).

In Tripolitania the loss of the legion was crucial, and a new system was introduced under the next emperor, Philip. At Gasr Duib (fig. 10.17H) a small post, 16 m square (52 1/2 ft sq), was built or rebuilt in AD 244–6. It is recorded on an inscription as a new *centenarium* constructed to close the region of the *limes* [*Tenftheitanus* and its road to bar-barian invasion. The existence of a similar building at Gasr Uames, between Gasr Duib and Mizda, suggests that the *limes* may now have been split into a number of separate zones, perhaps in the manner implied by the *Notitia*. The use of the rank *praepositus limitis* occurs for the first time, but, as a new inscription from Bu Ngem suggests, it probably refers to the senior officer responsible for the whole Tripolitanian frontier, and not just one of a series of local sector commanders.

Within a few years of the disbanding of the legion, a new frontier arrangement had been introduced into Tripolitania. Whether this system was created at a single sweep along the whole *limes*, is not certain, but is likely. At Kasr Tarcine (fig. 10.17G) an inscription of 297–303 records the building of *Centenarium Tibubuci*, and to the east, near Tarhuna, one possible and one certain *centenarium* inscription have been found. The last two, however, may well have been late private buildings imitating official ones (p. 264), and the military road down the Sofeggin may mark the real line of the *limes*, via Schedewa (fig. 10.17) and Schmeck, which has produced yet another *centenarium* stone. Beyond, at Bu Ngem, an auxiliary vexillation held the fort until after the return of the legion.

How Caesariensis was affected is not clear. The legion had always been available for intervention in that province if necessary: now Numidia itself needed assistance. Certainly the *Nova Praetentura* continued to be held, but troops appear to have been sent east and it might be suspected that areas behind the frontier were stripped of their police force and such units as local *numeri*. A vexillation of Mauri from Caesariensis is recorded at Lambaesis.

The forty years, or so, between the death of Gordian III and the

emergence of Diocletian saw the nadir of the High Empire, and its extinction. Barbarian pressure on the European and eastern frontiers, and Roman defeats and civil war, produced a breakaway Gallic Imperium in AD 259. A year later, after the capture of Valerian by the Persians, the eastern provinces were handed over to Palmyra. It is not surprising that there was also trouble in Africa and the scenario is not difficult to envisage: an increase of population during the long, predominantly peaceful years, reductions of police and security forces, increased taxation and ever-growing demands on the agricultural produce of the Tell, including, if Whittaker (1983) is correct, dependency on the same area by the tribes beyond the frontier, the gradual breakdown of central authority and mounting strain on officialdom. All led to outbreaks of lawlessness on both sides of the frontier.

In AD 253 Valerian restored *legio III Augusta* by sending a task force from Raetia and Noricum, perhaps containing troops who, after fifteen years' banishment, now wished to return home. In the middle 250s the governor Veturius Veturianus boasted of successful campaigning against barbarians, and military action near Auzia is known. In the following years several commanders recorded successful campaigning against Bavares, Babari Transtagnenses, Quinquegentanei and Fraxinenses, over an area from Sétif to Auzia, and about the same time Rapidum was destroyed. It appears that the removal of a portion of the outer frontier had enabled the external tribes to cross the *limes* and join rebellious internal factions, against all of whom a further governor, Macrinus Decianus, claimed three successful engagements. But the insecurity continued and it is significant that both Decianus and Veturianus were downgraded, for all their

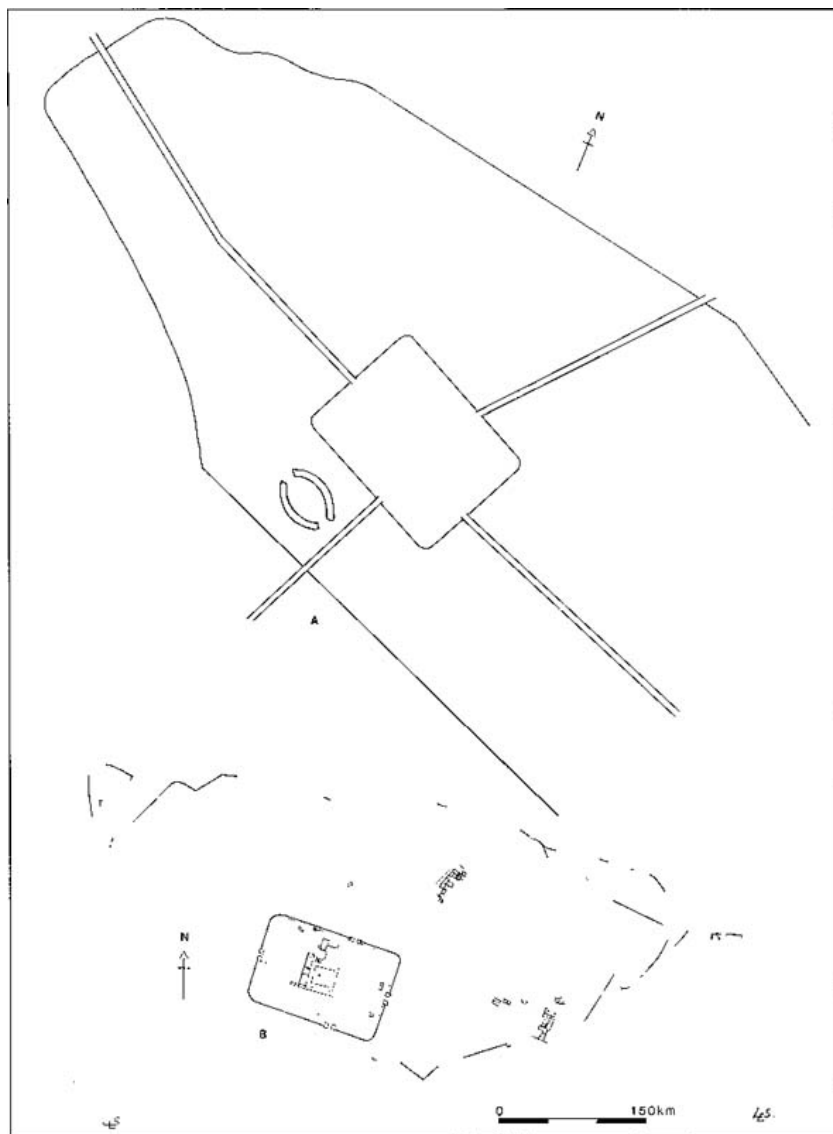


Figure 10.15 Forts and settlements: (A) Gemellae; (B) Bu Ngem (*after Kebuffat*)

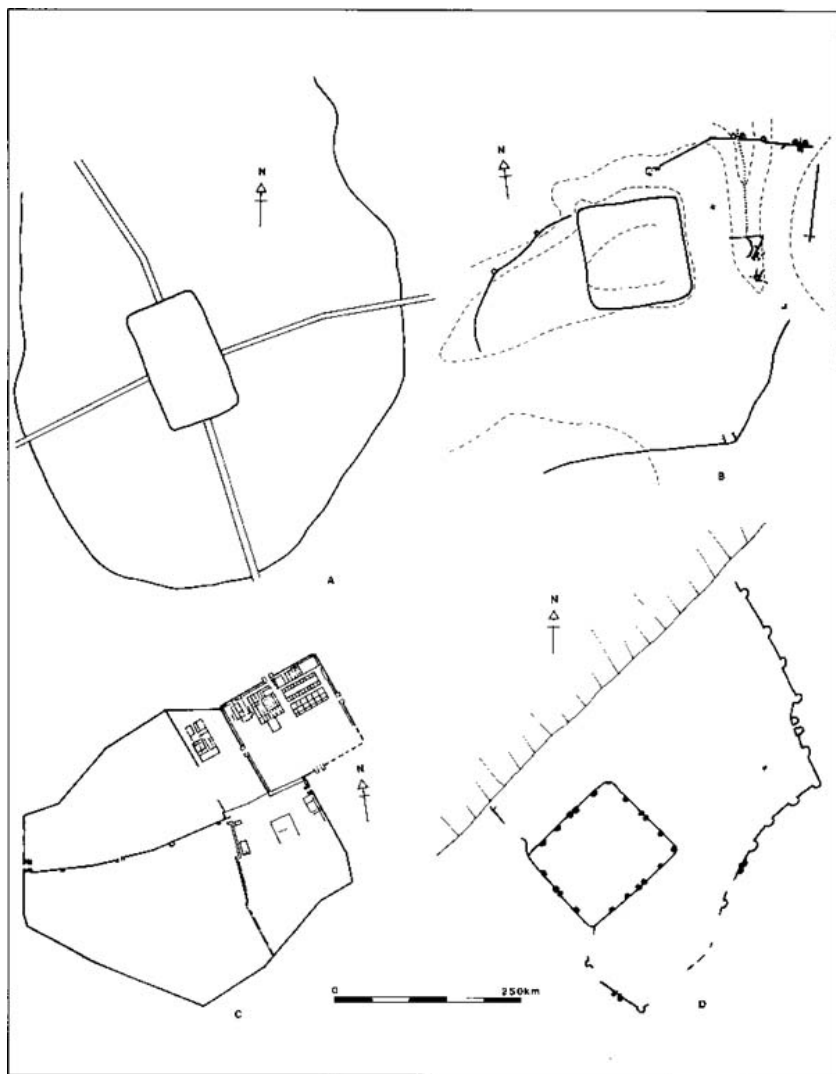


Figure 10.16 Forts and settlements: (A) Ad Maiores (after Baradez); (B) Tocolosida (after Euzetmat); (C) Rapidum; (D) Thamusida

claims of success (E. Birley, 1979). It was not until Cornelius Octavianus, a tried and experienced officer, was made *Dux per Africam Numidiam Mauretaniamque* that a major victory was won in, or soon after, AD 260 and commemorated by a monument at Sétif.

A further outbreak by Bavares and Quinquegentanei occurred, to be countered by the governor Aurelius Litua in AD 289 to 292–3. Again, a greater effort was required and in 296 the co-emperor Maximianus arrived

from Spain and swept the whole length of North Africa, finally restoring peace. On 10 March 298 he made a triumphal entry into Carthage.

Such a protracted period of disaster called for the sort of general reorganization which Diocletian was being forced to carry out in other regions of the Empire (fig. 10.18). The old provinces were split, a reform which had been begun before Maximianus' expedition with the separation of Sitifensis from the rest of Caesariensis and Byzacina from the rest of Proconsularis. This continued with the establishment of Tripolitania as a separate province and the division of Numidia into Cirtensis and Militana. But only in Tingitana was an area of territory given up. The whole south of the province, including Volubilis and Thamusida, was abandoned at some date after AD 280 (the last recorded treaty with the Baquates). The new frontier ran from Frigidiae to the river Lukkos and then to Tamuda, although to the south Sala was certainly held until well into the fourth century and it is just possible that Banasa, too, was kept, for it may appear in the *Notitia* under the name of Castra Bariensis. The reduced province was placed under the vicar of Spain, in the Gallic Prefecture, thus finalizing the split with the rest of Africa.

Courtois (1955) argued that western Caesariensis was also abandoned late in the third century, but Salama's study of the evidence (1966) showed that this was not the case. When compared with the extensive abandoned areas of Germany, Raetia and the whole of Dacia, the comparatively minor loss of territory along the southern frontier of the empire, after such a strife-torn half century, is noteworthy.

Under Diocletian frontiers were generally strengthened. In addition to the small, tower-like *centenarium* constructed in AD 297–303 at Tibubuci (fig. 10.17G), the very much larger *centenarium* of Aqua Viva (fig. 10.19D) was built at M'doukal, west of the Mesarfelta sector of the *fossatum*. Rectangular forts with projecting angle and interval towers and with their garrison buildings placed against the rear face of the fort walls, are standard types to be seen at many early and mid fourth-century sites. Zebaret et Tir (fig. 10.19A), between Aqua Viva and the Chott el Hodna, is similar, but has a freestanding headquarters building in the centre. Aquae Herculis and Seba Mgata (figs. 10.19H, I) lie behind the Mesarfelta sector of *fossatum*. Further south the 'Castellum Schneider' of Baradez (fig. 10.19G) at Doucen and Guey's Bourada (fig. 10.19C), are akin to Zebaret, if smaller in size. These new constructions must be seen as reinforcing the existing frontier line, which still ran from Oued Djedi to Doucen, el Gahra and Medjedel. A matching site can be seen in northern Tingitana at Tamuda (fig. 10.19B).

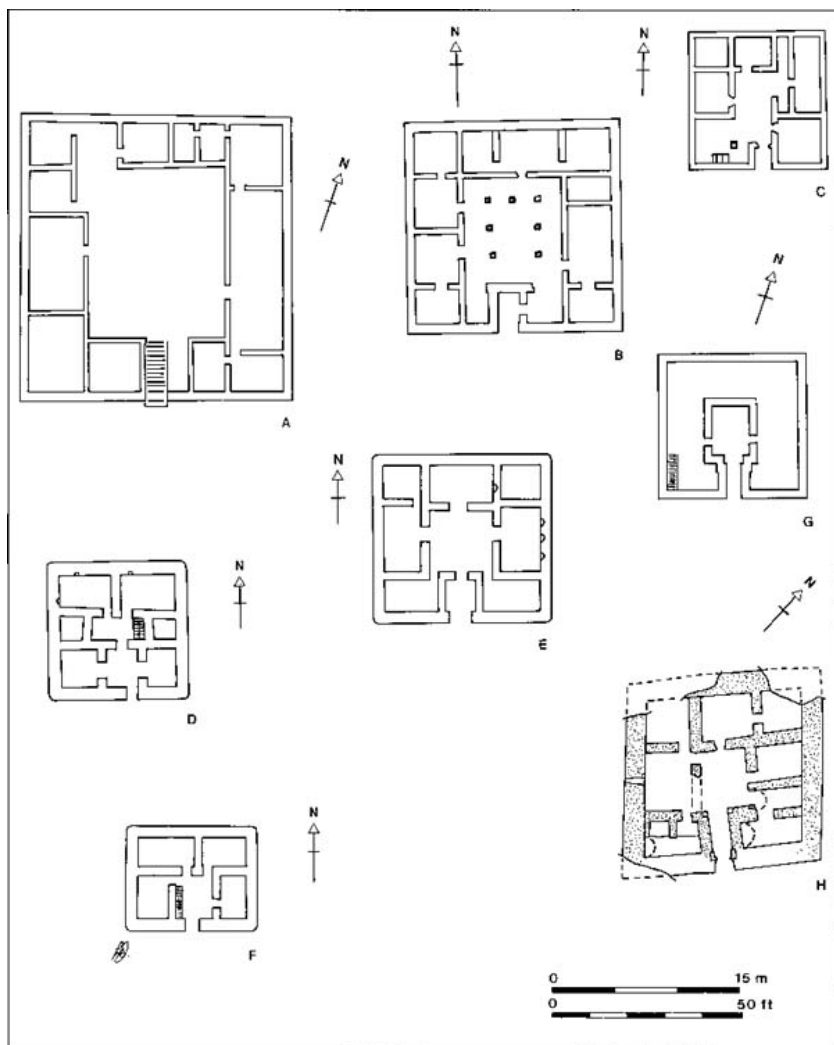


Figure 10.17 Small *centenaria*, *burgi* and towers: (A) Ras el Oued Gordab; (B) Henchir el Gueciret; (C) Henchir Remtia (after Euzennat); (D,E,F) Gasr Bir Scedewa (after Goodchild); (G) Tibubuci (after Euzennat); (H) Gasr Duib (after Goodchild)

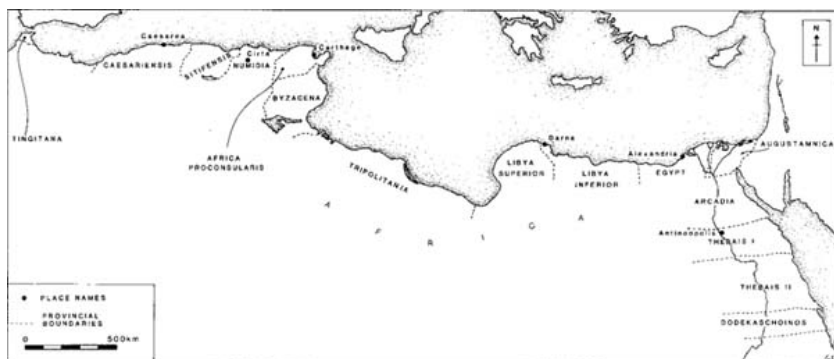


Figure 10.18 The dioceses and provinces of north Africa in the late Empire

There, however, the fort was an earlier structure, to which projecting angle and interval towers were added and the gates remodelled.

Now, at last, the army of Africa was enlarged to seven legions, with another in Tingitana, not to mention cavalry and frontier troops. It also underwent further alterations during the fourth century, including changes in the status and grouping of units, both *limitanei* (frontier troops) and *comitatenses* (the field army). In the *Notitia* the *limitanei* are divided between the Comes Africae, the Dux Tripolitaniae and the Dux Mauretaniae, where they are listed under the command of more than thirty *praepositi limitum* (regional commanders), each with a geographical location as a name. Some of these can be identified, including sites on the *limes Tripolitanus* road, the old Numidian frontier from Turris Tamalleni to the Hodna and at Columnata, but others cause problems, especially those which appear to be duplicated in both the dukes' commands and the count's. In addition, the count also commanded a body of *comitatenses* amounting to some 21,000 men. All this has caused Jones to suggest that the command originated as a limitanean duke who was raised to the rank of count when the comitatensian field-force became a permanent addition.

The composition of these frontier forces is revealed by a law of Honorius, dated AD 409, which states that land in Africa had been granted to *gentiles* for the care and maintenance of the frontier and *fossatum* (*munitionemque limites atque fossati*), which is usually interpreted as meaning that the frontier areas were entrusted to barbarian tribesmen (*gentiles*) under the supervision of army officers (*praepositi*). But Goodchild (1950) pointed out that the officers themselves, or at any rate the tribunes buried at Bir ed-Dreder just south of the Wadi Sofeggin, were not culturally very far removed from the barbarians they commanded. At last a limitanean soldier-farmer peasant army can be seen holding the frontier.

But it appears to comprise natives (*gentiles*) occupying the lands

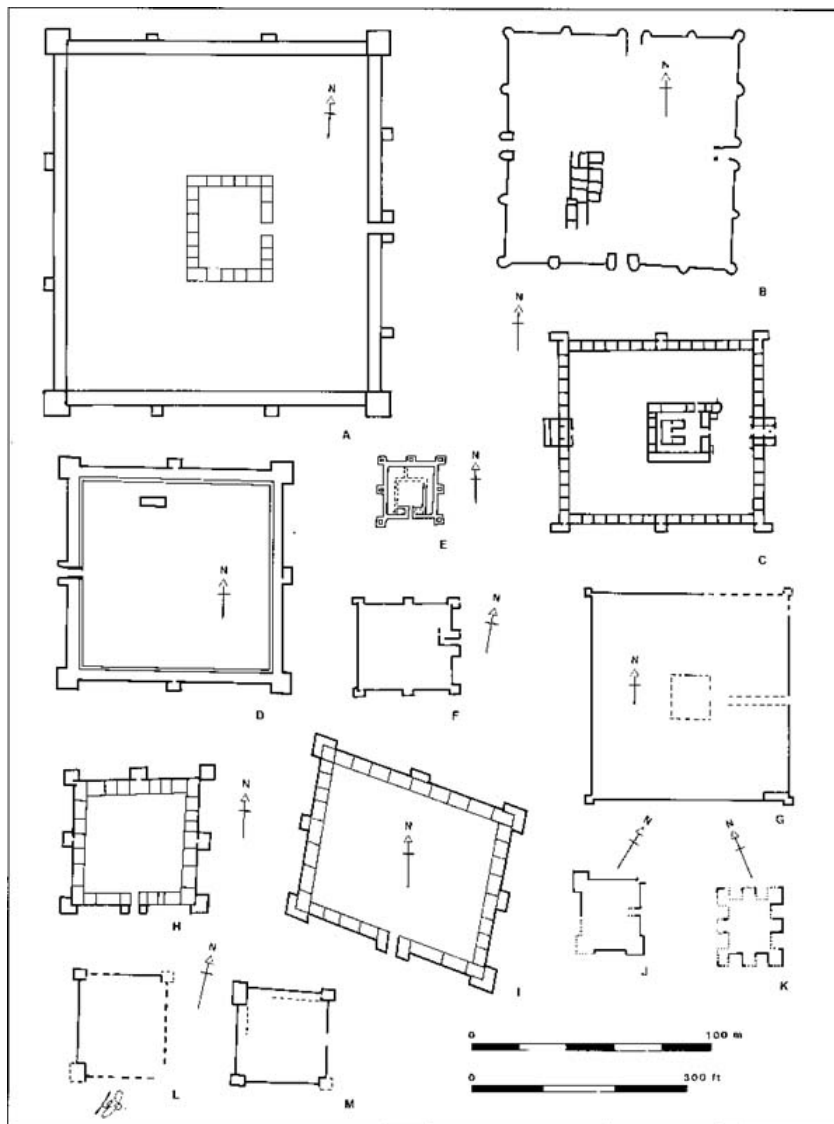


Figure 10.19 Late forts: (A) Zebaret et Tir (*after Baradez*); (B) Tamuda (*after Johnson*); (C) Bourada (*after Guey*); (D) Centenarium Aqua Viva (*after Leschi*); (E) Mselletin (*after Haynes*); (F) Benia bel Reheb (*after Euzennat*); (G) Doucen (*after Jones et al.*); (H) Aquae Herculis (*after Baradez*); (I) Seba Mgata (*after Fentress*); (J) Henchir Temassine (*after Euzennat*); (K) Henchir Rjijila (*after Euzennat*); (L) Tailimun (*after Goodchild*); (M) el-Benia, Gasr el-Geballa (*after Goodchild*)

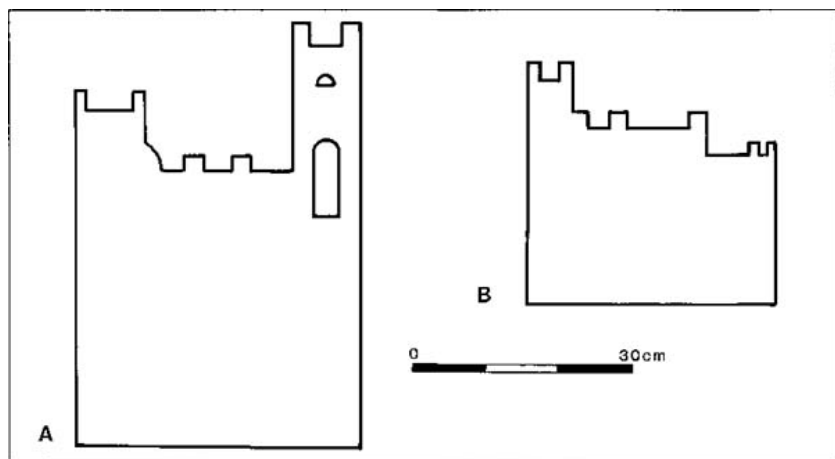


Figure 10.20 Sketch of two fortified structures; to the left (after Troussel)

on both sides of the old *limes*, and not the Roman, colonist soldier-farmer force it has traditionally been claimed to have been. In the light of this the barbaric inscriptions of the *centenaria* at Schmeck and near Tarhuna take on a new aspect. These buildings, and the small fort at Gasr Bularkan (fig. 10.19E), described by Goodchild as a police post, are very much the sort of structures which the *gentiles* of the frontiers could be expected to have built themselves. Together with such private *gsur* as Henchir Gueciret in the Jebel Matmata of Tunisia (fig. 10.20 for a graffito thought to be the profile of this sort of building), they follow in the long-lived Berber tradition of towers, described by such earlier writers as Diodorus Siculus, Sallust and Caesar. Perhaps the sizeable settlement of Ghirza, to the south of Wadi Zemzem, should be seen in the same context.

The law of Honorius mentions the frontier and the *fossatum* in a way which suggests that they are closely connected. Jones and Mattingley (1980) published a coin of AD 353–5 from a gateway of the Mesarfelta sector, showing that it was still in use at that date. Lengths of *clausura* are known which block access through Jebel Tebaga and the Oueds Zraïa, Skiffa and Chenini, all in the Matmata region (fig. 10.12C,D). Troussel (1974) argues their function to have been the control of nomads, and couples the names of Flavius Archontius Nilus (Comes and Praeses of Tripolitania in 355–60) and Flavius Nepotianus, specifically, with this sort of control. To the east, not far from Asabaa in the Gebel Garian, Lady Brogan recently found a 6-kilometre length (3 J miles) of *clausura* at Hadd Hajar, complete with gate (fig. 10.12F), all very much in the same style as those near Matmata. In spite of its superior-quality construction the shut-off

wall with gateway at Bir oum Ali, south-east of Gafsa, and others across adjacent valleys in Jebel el Asker, would surely fit better into this period than Trajanic times, as has already been suggested.

Historically, the fourth century saw raiding and revolts continuing. In the 360s Tripolitania suffered from attacks by the fierce nomadic Austuriani. The demands of Count Romanus for large quantities of supplies and 4,000 camels, before he would act to save Lepcis, are well-known and finally bring our attention to the beast which is generally considered to be the indispensable tool of desert control. In reality, various studies have made it quite clear that the use of the camel at an early date was very rare west of the Nile, other than for agriculture (Gasr Tigi reliefs) or as a beast of burden (Bu Ngem *ostraca*). Although *dromadarii*, camel scouts, are recorded at Luxor in AD 156, there is so far only one possible matching reference from further west, before the fourth century. Antonine long-range patrols and Severan advances were carried out by equestrian cavalry, as was the Arab conquest.

The revolts of Firmus and Gildo, although they involved the army and general security, do not primarily concern the frontier; the pro and anti-Roman alliances of this family were more reminiscent of the vicious squabbles of the descendants of Masinissa or the opportunist alliances and betrayals of the Mauretanian and Numidian dynasties in the days of Carthage and the Roman Republic.

The next event was the Vandal invasion, followed by the fall of Carthage in AD 439 and the demolition of many town and city walls. Roman Africa had still over two centuries to run before the Arab invasions of the seventh century, but the *limes* system, as it has been seen, now ceased to function, if in fact it had not already ceased some time before.

When successful invasion occurred it was not from the south. The Vandals and Byzantines came from the sea, as had Rome's invasion of Carthage, and the Arabs from the east, through Syria. In short, the desert frontier was successfully held, over immense distances and by the smallest of regional armies, for something over half a millennium. Unlike the Rhine and Danube lines and the eastern frontier, all of which finally broke under barbarian attack, the special nature of the African *limes*, with its policy of regulation rather than preclusion, proved to be the most successful of all.

• THE • EAST •

David Kennedy

And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer.... And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (*Revelations*, 6. 1–6)

When, in 1071, Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes and his army were destroyed on the fateful battlefield of Manzikert in eastern Anatolia, it brought to an end over eleven and a half centuries of Roman military activity on the Euphrates, dating back to 92 BC when the commander in Cilicia, L. Cornelius Sulla, led the first Roman force there and made the first official contact with Parthia. The Parthian envoy came with offers of friendship and alliance; however, the cordiality of this first meeting soon evaporated. Within less than a generation Lucullus is found (69–7) campaigning east of the river in Armenia and allegedly contemplating an attack on Parthia; in 53 Crassus paid the price at Carrhae for his unprovoked attack on the Parthian empire and Roman Syria, stripped of many of its defenders by the disaster, was open to Parthian invasion. This first meeting did, however, establish the Euphrates as the limit of power and influence for each empire and it is notable that the amicable initiative came from Parthia. Notable, too, that even then the Roman general sought to emphasize Rome's pre-eminence: the envoy was afterwards executed for allowing Sulla to seat himself between the Great King's representative and the king of Cappadocia, as if interviewing vassals.

For almost seven centuries after Carrhae, Rome seems continually at war with first Parthia, then her Sasanian Persian successor, in a struggle along and beyond the Euphrates from its headwaters to the Palmyrene desert. Ultimately, and almost simultaneously, in AD 636, the two great protagonists, mutually debilitated by their final protracted and bloody war, were each crushingly defeated in battle by the ragged but inspired armies of Islam which on the one hand overthrew Sasanian Persia and on the other deprived Rome of her Syrian and North African provinces. At a stroke, the seemingly interminable struggle was ended, and a new Muslim Arab Empire united the lands on both sides of the former southern Euphrates frontier. The menace on the upper Euphrates was to return with the Turks but, for the moment, the danger was on the south-east.

In any examination of Rome's eastern frontier, it is inevitable that the discussion will centre on the relationship between Rome and her great neighbour. It was only in the east, after all, that she faced another great power, comparable in size and strength to herself. Moreover, the surviving literary sources for the eastern frontier are dominated by the tensions, crises and wars of the 'super powers' of classical antiquity. These same sources, overwhelmingly Roman, especially in the Parthian period, saw the struggle through the eyes of an aristocracy who were not only steeped in the Greek and Hellenistic accounts of earlier struggles with oriental powers, but also the inheritors of these same states, now the provinces of Achaea and Macedonia, which had, respectively, withstood Darius and Xerxes and overthrown the first Persian empire. Crassus and Trajan were not alone in believing that the military might and resources of the Roman Empire should have made them capable of emulating Alexander. In short, Rome could not accept equality with a state she believed she should dominate if not actually destroy. From the outset, both in attitude and in behaviour, Rome is the more aggressive. Parthia seldom struck at Roman territory or vassals west of the Euphrates, being usually on the defensive, responding to Roman intervention amongst her vassals or satraps. Indeed, even by the time of Augustus, Parthia had begun a slow decline, remaining without territorial ambitions beyond her Euphrates frontier.

Lucullus initiated Roman intervention beyond the Euphrates and although it was subsequently accepted as a boundary, Rome is soon found involved again to its east. For long the bone of contention was the large kingdom of Armenia; later principally Mesopotamia. Strategically, however, both were firmly linked. Parthia could never acquiesce easily to a Roman vassal in Armenia outflanking and dominating her own wealthy vassals in northern Mesopotamia; a Roman Mesopotamia, however, was no

better, making a Parthian vassaldom in Armenia untenable. Inevitably early Roman efforts to dominate Armenia led on to intervention in Mesopotamia. What began for Republican Rome as simply the centuries-old momentum of expansion became, to some extent, in the early Principate, an actual military need to secure her north-eastern frontier by control of the southern Caucasus states – Iberia, Colchis, Albania and Armenia. The awareness of the threat from the Transcaucasian Sarmatians made it desirable at least to influence the states which controlled the southern exits of the handful of passes, as well as Armenia, which was the lynch-pin of the region. Preferably they should control these passes themselves: mountains, as Napoleon knew, make much better frontiers than rivers. The same considerations of security affected Parthia and Persia – indeed affected them more acutely since they were the first to bear the brunt of a Sarmatian invasion, but like Rome, they were unwilling to allow the key to their security in this area to be in the hands of a potential foe. Despite the blood spilled in the wars, it is ironic – and instructive – that by the end of the fourth century no more had been achieved than a partition of Armenia and Mesopotamia, the lion's share going to Persia: pathetically small gains when one thinks back to the promise of great success implicit in Lucullus' capture of the new Armenian capital Tigranocerta in 69 BC and the temporary vassaldom of Osroene in the last generation of the Republic.

Despite the dramatic imagery of the Revelation, invoked already by Mommsen and Wheeler, outright war was in fact infrequent in the Parthian period. Nor was it in practice a misfortune for either protagonist that two of the three great empires of the ancient world should have been juxtaposed, rather than remote and isolated as China. Despite mutual suspicion and the potential menace of the huge military resources on either side, throughout much of their history each in fact represented the sole element of reliable stability amongst the many peoples on their respective frontiers. The gloryseeking, or aggressive opportunism, or urgings of destiny which motivated Trajan, the early Severi, Ardashir and the first two Sapers, were the exception; most rulers, Roman Emperor or Great King, saw their major and long-term frontier threat, the challenge to their civilization itself, amongst the numerous, unpredictable, and often more volatile barbarian neighbours along the Central European and Central Asian frontiers, rather than from one another. As a rule, each had more to lose by defeat than they could realistically hope to gain by success in war with one another. The danger posed to Rome by her eastern neighbour may be judged by the crude comparison of army sizes in the mid-second century ([fig. 11.1](#)).

The European frontier is of course something like twice the length of the

eastern and, not surprisingly, had twice the garrison. The eastern total, however, includes a large figure (c. 17,000) for the internal garrisoning of Palaestina (p. 277 below); without that element the eastern frontier has only some 10,000 more troops than the single province of Britain. In terms of manpower, the eastern frontier was garrisoned very economically: a reflection, in part at least, of the underlying stability and reliability of the relationship with Parthia; in part, of the means employed to defend and control the frontier provinces. The development of Roman control west of the Euphrates and the changed condition in her eastern neighbour help to explain the growth in size, changed character and re-organized deployment of her forces (p. 279 below).

A point which must be stressed is that for all the aggressiveness of successive Rome dynasts and emperors, the size of the Roman forces in the east could not of itself be a reason for constant disquiet for either Parthia or Persia. In every offensive war against the neighbouring empire, Rome had to concentrate not only much of the forces along the entire eastern frontier, but also to draft in substantial reinforcements from distant

Figure 11.1 Distribution of Frontier Forces c. 150

Region	Legions	Men	Auxilia	%	Men	%	Strength	Men	%
	Number		Units						
Britain	3	15,000	60	15.6	35,180	15.7	50,180	13.8	
Rhine & Danube	14	70,000	173	44.8	99,900	44.7	169,900	46.7	
East	8	40,000	65	16.8	37,940	17.0	77,940	21.4	
Africa	2	10,000	60	15.5	33,170	14.8	43,170	11.9	
(Other)	1	5,000	28	7.3	17,500	7.8	22,500	6.2	
Totals	28	140,000	386	100.0	223,690	100.0	363,690	100.0	

(Adapted from Birley, 198b, 40–2)

provinces; wars could be seen in the making for months, indeed years, before hostilities began. Conversely, the frontier garrisons and provincial armies were only just adequate for internal security and defence: sufficient certainly to give an opponent pause, to delay if not repulse him while a major field force was prepared. For their part, Parthia and Persia both relied on a small royal army supplemented in war by the nobility and their retainers. It is noteworthy that in the long struggle between the predominating heavy infantry of Rome and the aristocratic horsemen and mounted archers of Parthia, it was the former which rebalanced her forces to give pride of place to cavalry; both empires adopted the mailed cavalry of their common Sarmatian enemy.

A concern with one another was not the sole military preoccupation of either empire. The Islamic armies of the seventh century were the outcome of a lengthy process of development among the Arabs of the steppe and desert from Mesopotamia to the Arabian peninsula. Moreover, in practical terms, especially as the client-states were absorbed, an increasingly large part of the eastern garrison was unconcerned with the single threat from Parthia or Persia, being deployed rather to police the growing power and ambitions of these nomads on or beyond the frontier zones.

Finally, there was the threat from the Transcaucasian Sarmatians mentioned above. The forceful arrival of the Sarmatian Iazyges and Roxolani on the lower Danube in the time of Nero emphasized the need to check the advance of many other Sarmatian tribes to the east of the Black Sea. In practice, the coastal route through Colchis was in Roman control first through a client-king, later through the forts described by Arrian ([fig. 11.12a–e](#)). Iberia and Albania each controlled a vital mountain route, the Darial Pass/Caucasian Gates and Derbend Pass/Caspian Gates respectively, control of which prevented access to either empire. It is probably these two passes which became from at least 244 the object of subventions from Rome for the maintenance of mutually beneficial Persian garrisons.

The frontier region

The anchor points of the eastern frontier lay at Trapezus and Aila, respectively on the Black and Red Seas; appropriately, each the base of a legion in the fourth century ([fig. 11.2](#)). The direct distance of almost 1,400 km (870 miles), impressive enough in itself, is misleading in that it hides the enormous difficulties presented by the terrain – mountain, river, steppe and desert, and ignores outposts and salients. Nor does it tell the whole story: the eastern army was responsible both for the Sinai Peninsula, and the Hisma and even, at one time, the Hedjaz; in the north, the frontier was extended through a chain of forts around the eastern end of the Black Sea to Sebastopolis. All told, the marching distance by the shortest route from Sebastopolis to Hegra was well over 3,000 km (1,860 miles), stretching today across nine modern countries ([fig. 11.3](#)).

One may divide the entire zone into two sectors: the mountain and riverine frontier in eastern Anatolia, and the steppe or desert, at times mountainous, from Mesopotamia to the Hedjaz. Along the former were to be found substantial populations involved in agriculture and pastoralism,

those in the north able to exploit the lucrative minerals and extensive forests of the Pontic Alps. The major viable routes are few: that along the coastal lands past Trapezus; a caravan route from Armenia passing westwards from Satala to Ancyra and the Hellespont; also from Armenia a road through Melitene to Ancyra again or to the cities and ports of Ionia. This last, and that which reached Samosata (pl. 11.1) were the major crossing points of the northern Euphrates in an east-west direction. All, naturally, had both strategic and economic importance. Between Samosata and Satala the Euphrates itself suggested the longitudinal route, while in the final northern stretch the road to Trapezus had to negotiate the Pontic Alps through the vital Zigana Pass. The mountainous lands of eastern Anatolia present a tortured landscape, harsh winters being succeeded by very hot summers. It is also a dangerous earthquake zone.

South of Commagene one reaches the steppe of Mesopotamia and Syria, lands quite thinly populated until recently but clearly intensely settled in antiquity. In the Syrian Desert itself the main military zone runs through desert to Palmyra, then along the mountain chain of the Jebel esh-Sharqi towards Damascus. The fertile volcanic zone of the southern Hauran extends the zone eastwards once more before it proceeds south-south-west along the desert's edge in Jordan to the Hedjaz coast of the Red Sea.

Archaeological and epigraphic evidence

The archaeological evidence for the location, character and development of the eastern frontier is patchy, and often confusing. The basic evidence for much of the region remains even now the maps of Poidebard and Stein from before the Second World

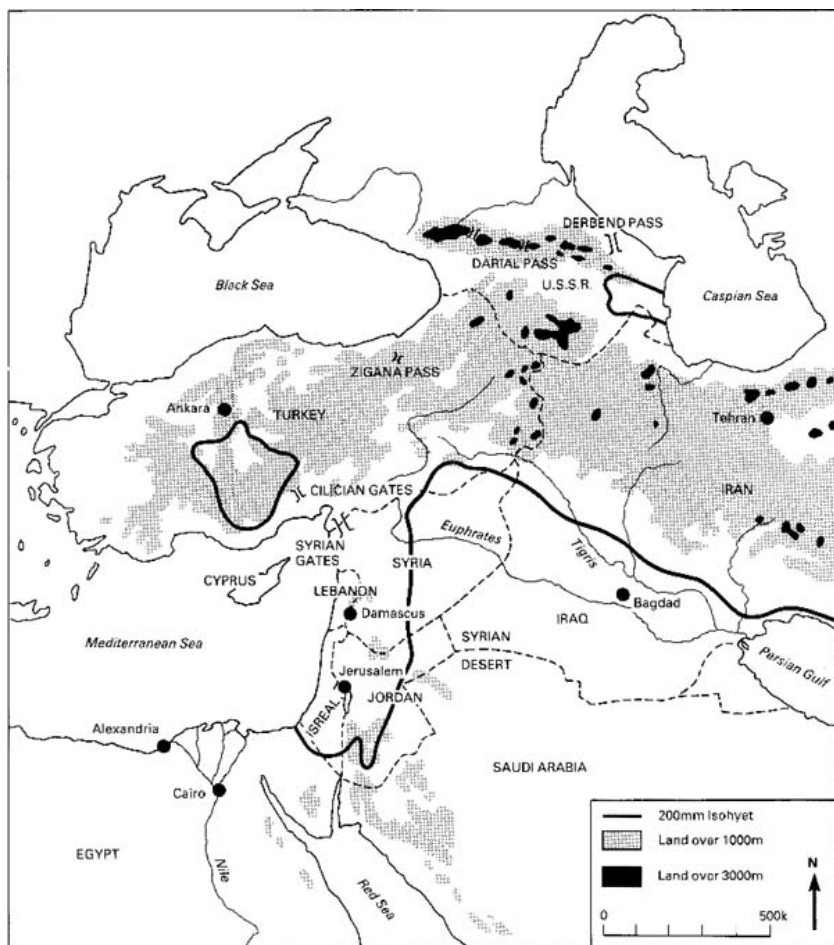


Figure 11.2 The physical geography of the eastern frontier region



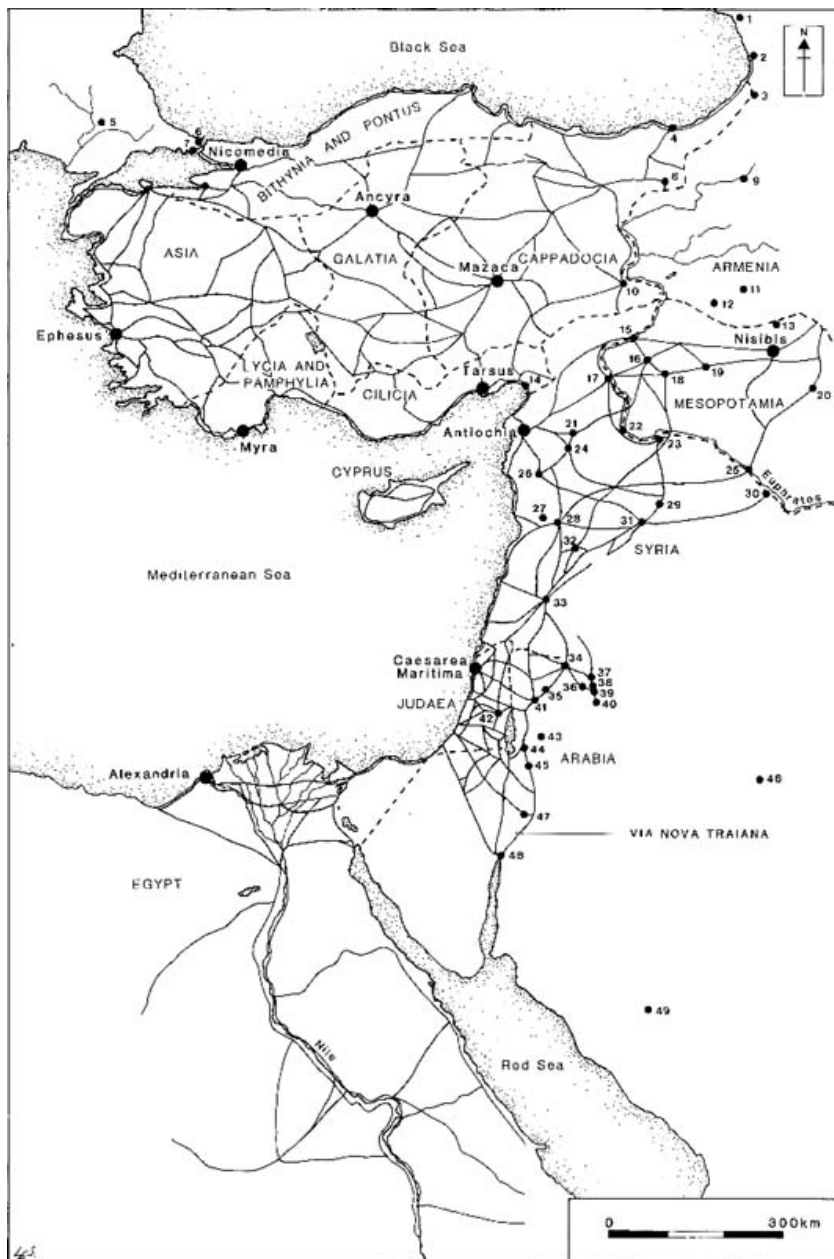


Figure 11.3 The eastern frontier area the Roman Empire

1 Sebastopolis; 2 Phasis; 3 Colchis; 4 Trapezus; 5 Adrianople; 6 Constantinople; 7 Byzantium; 8 Satala; 9 Elegeia; 10 Melitene; 11 Tigranocerta; 12 Amida; 13 Bezabde; 14 Issus; 15 Samosata; 16 Edessa; 17 Zeugma; 18 Carrhae; 19 Resaina; 20 Singara; 21 Beroea; 22 Barbalissis; 23 Sura; 24 Chalcis; 25 Circesium; 26 Apamea; 27 Raphanaea; 28 Emesa; 29 Oriza; 30 Dura-Europus; 31 Palmyra; 32

Danaba; 33 Damascus; 34 Bostra; 35 Qasr el-Hallabat; 36 Qottein; 37 Imatan; 38 Deir-el Kahf 39 Basiena; 40 Azraq; 41 Philadelphia; 42 Jerusalem; 43 Qasr Bshir; 44 Lejjun; 45 Quweira; 46 Jauf; 47 Petra; 48 Aila; 49 Medain Salih

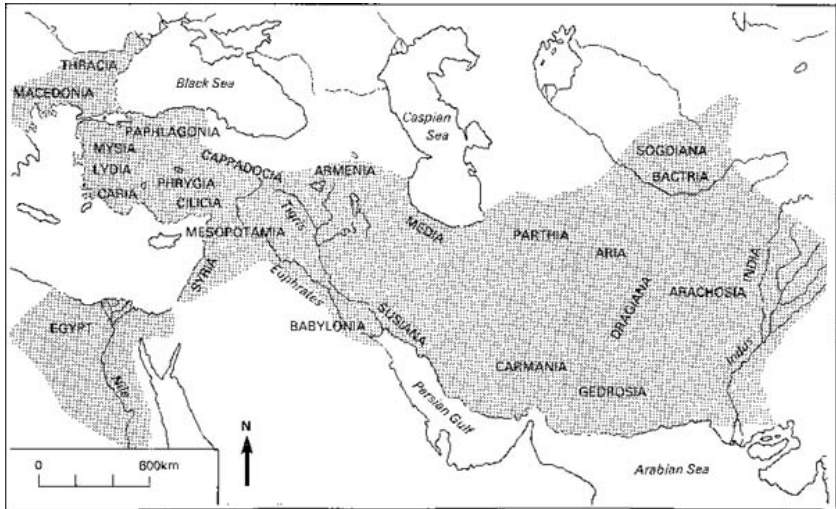


Figure 11.4 Alexander's Empire, c. 323 BC

War. It has long been recognized that these present a palimpsest of several centuries of occupation and, indeed, include a number of non-Roman sites. At all times, field work has varied considerably in quality and intensity from area to area; nor, even at its best, has it been on the scale one is familiar with in Britain – thus, in Arabia, a relatively well-explored province, new work has produced four new forts in the last three years. A major problem of course is that in the early Empire many regiments were simply billeted in the great towns of the east, where, even if they had their own camp, it is likely to have been long since obliterated by centuries of continuous occupation; likewise, those sites not in towns but still in the fertile lands on the edge of the steppe and intensively farmed since antiquity. Thus, we get a very unbalanced picture reflecting patterns and intensity of later settlement, modern research, and the division between the heavily urbanized regions in which garrisons lay in the early Empire, from which little evidence is available, and the steppe and desert with marvellously well-preserved late fortifications. For the early Empire, fortunately, inscriptions go some way to remedying the lack of physical evidence. Some military diplomas, naming and locating units ([pl. 11.2](#)) give wonderful pictures of part at least of the auxiliary garrison on the given date. Only at the end of our period, with the important information of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, is it possible precisely to locate a large number of

units at specific places which can be equated with known forts (e.g. [fig. 11.14](#)).

Development and character of the frontier

In 30 BC, despite the huge manpower surplus available to him, Augustus elected not to take up Caesar's planned eastern war to avenge Crassus and the subsequent Parthian invasions of Syria and Asia Minor. Instead, Roman prestige for these and the more recent failure of Antony's Parthian War (36–4 BC), as well as regional objectives, was to be regained by military pressure and diplomacy. Rightly so, throughout his long reign, the principal military preoccupations of Augustus were in Europe. Moreover, much needed to be done west of the Euphrates before further major advances could be contemplated. Thus, although a considerable degree of order had been imposed on the haphazard acquisition and alliances of Rome in the east by Pompey's settlement (63 BC), two civil wars, Parthian invasions and two Roman assaults on Parthia and her vassals had, by 30 BC, renewed the need for a reassessment and reorganization. For all that he avoided war with his major neighbour, Augustus was every bit as much the imperialist in the east as he was in the west. Reorganization for Augustus meant an advance of Rome's directly administered territories; as in Pompey's scheme, however, a chain of petty kings, recognized as vassals, was retained ([fig. 11.6](#)). To the west of the Euphrates, Parthia accepted that Rome might arrange matters as she saw fit; Armenia to the east, however, was a different matter. The Augustan policy, pursued by his successors for almost a century, sought to turn Armenia into a Roman buffer state. In practice this called for the installation of a king approved by Rome and, if necessary, placed there by force of arms. It was a policy which was resisted from time to time not only by the Parthians but by factions among the Armenians themselves. The resulting turbulence is reflected in the rapid changes of ruler and repeated interventions by Roman or Parthian forces. Nevertheless, the prestige of Augustan Rome and the quiescence of Parthia in this period enabled the policy to work well enough, as symbolized by the diplomatic coup in 20 BC when Phraates IV returned the lost Roman eagles taken from the legions of Crassus and Antony, recognized Roman suzerainty over Armenia and subsequently accepted the installation of a Roman nominee by Tiberius. Roman pre-eminence was again recognized in AD 2 when Phraates V negotiated a peace with Gaius Caesar and conceded

his right to proceed to install another Roman candidate by force. It is a measure of Augustus' prestige and perseverance that he was able to pursue this policy for so long despite the recurrent upheavals in Armenia and the rejection or death of so many of his nominees.

Within the acknowledged Roman sphere of power and influence west of the Euphrates, the policy was much easier to implement and more successful: others came and went but in AD 14 Pontus, Armenia Minor, Cappadocia, Commagene, Cilicia, Emesa, Chalcis, Ituraea, Galilee and Nabataea all had client-kings and there were varying degrees of restraint on the rulers of Iberia, Colchis and Albania, and Palmyra had been brought under Roman control. In the distant south one can see the Augustan imperialist

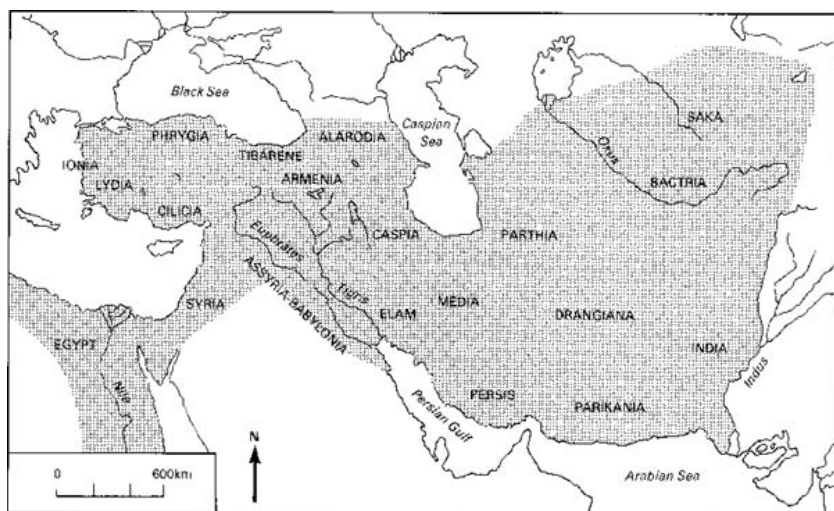


Figure 11.5 Achaemenid Empire (fourth century BC)

policy very clearly at work: in c. 26 BC, Aelius Gallus, the Prefect of Egypt, was sent on an expedition down the coast of Arabia 'into the territory of the Sabaeans to the town of Mariba'. Less than a generation later Augustus may well have briefly annexed the Nabataean kingdom, not to restore it until AD 1 and the *expeditio Arabica* of Gaius Caesar to the Gulf of Aqaba (Bowersock, 1983, 54–7).

The numerous client-states in the east, and in general their reliability, explain both the relatively small scale of the Roman forces and their distribution in the early Principate. The poor quality of the evidence for most of the Julio–Claudian period cannot be the sole explanation for the mere handful of auxiliary units attested. Rather, as when Aelius Gallus

called upon Herod of Judaea and the Nabataean king to supply 500 and 1,000 troops respectively for his Arabian expedition or, most graphically of all, the 7,000 archers and 3,000 cavalry supplied by the client-kings of Emesa, Commagene, Ituraea and Nabataea, for the Jewish War of Vespasian and Titus, Rome supplemented her heavy legionaries principally from the armies of her royal clients. At the death of Augustus, there were apparently only four legions for the entire region, all, moreover, concentrated in northern Syria from Cyrrhus to Raphanaea, screening the major cities at the terminus of the most obvious Parthian invasion route as well as securing their large populations.

Locating the Roman army in the Augustan period is almost impossible. Literary evidence leaves little doubt that the legions were based near, if not in, the great cities

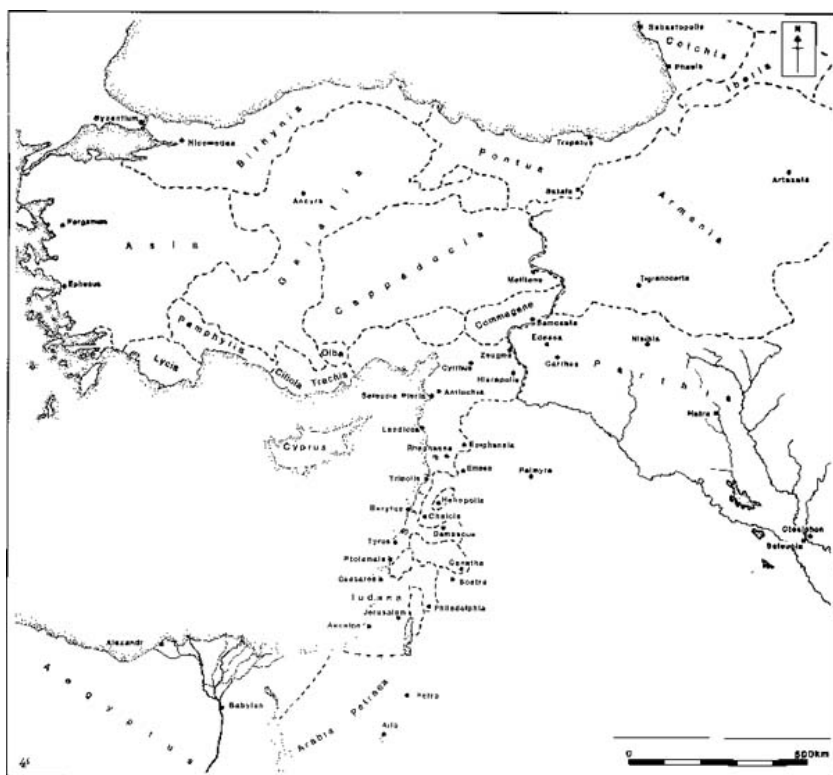


Figure 11.6 Eastern frontier provinces at the death of Augustus (AD 14)

of northern Syria. One may suppose the same to be true of many, perhaps most, auxiliary units; it was certainly the case a little later in Judaea as Josephus and the New Testament makes clear. In short, the soldiers were

deployed, partly to be readily assembled for war, partly for securing a substantial and considerably urbanized population, and partly to ease the burden on the provincials of their supply. We do not know what these 'urban forts' were like: since the Praetorian Guard in Rome remained billeted in houses until the reign of Tiberius there is no reason to believe otherwise for the east too in this period or later. Perhaps, like the Guard, which acquired two-storeyed barracks in the *Castra Praetoria*, the eastern soldiers too, when and if they received purpose-built quarters, constructed barracks more like the high density housing of the cities than the style one is so familiar with in the west.

The development of the eastern frontier after Augustus looks logical and inevitable if it is viewed again from the situation under Antoninus Pius. By then most of the Augustan client-states had gone. Some (Pontus Polemoniachus, Armenia Minor, Commagene) were absorbed into existing provinces; others (Cappadocia, Nabataea) were themselves the core of new frontier provinces. Direct Roman control has been advanced to the Colchian coast up to the Euphrates and out into the steppe and desert of Syria and Arabia. The buffer-states and their armies now gone, the Roman army is inevitably both larger and more evenly distributed.

Two legions, at Satala (*XV Apollinaris*) and Melitene (*XII Fulminata*), and a small fleet at Trapezus are at the disposal of the consular governor of Cappadocia (fig. 11.7A, D). In the south, the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in 106 soon led to a legion (*III Cyrenaica*) being stationed in the provincial capital, Bostra. Palaestina (formerly Judaea), though not a frontier province, had legions at Caparcotna (*VI Ferrata*) and Jerusalem (*X Fretensis*). With the extent of his military jurisdiction so much reduced, it is no surprise to find only three legions under the governor of Syria: one at Raphanaea (*III Gallica*) and two on the Euphrates at Samosata (*XVI Flavia*; pl. 11.1) and Zeugma (*IV Scythica*). Relative to his reduced responsibilities, his army was, however, stronger than a century earlier. Scattered inscriptions and, in particular, military diplomas, now suggest a powerful auxiliary presence in the same provinces: *c.* 32,000 (Cappadocia = *c.* 8,000; Syria = *c.* 14,500; Palaestina = *c.* 4,500; Arabia = *c.* 5,000). Thus, between Augustus and the mid-second century, the Roman forces had been at least doubled in numbers; the majority (except in Palaestina), advanced into the frontier zone itself. Of the *auxilia*, about one quarter were cavalry units, and most of the infantry units had a mounted element (*cohortes equitatae*).

This comparison, however, disguises a complex history. The annexation of the client-states and the shouldering of direct responsibility for relations with Parthia or her vassals, was begun on a large scale soon after Augustus'

death, then reversed, only to begin again with Nero and Vespasian. Three major wars were fought with Parthia, involving an abandonment of the Augustan policy towards Armenia after the first, its restoration after the second, and the vigorous pursuit of dominance over both Armenia and north-west Mesopotamia initiated in the second, achieved in the third, to be finally consolidated and extended to the Tigris by Septimius Severus a generation later still.

Tiberius' absorption of Commagene into Syria and the appointing of a procurator to govern Cappadocia, his subsequent annexation of Pontus Polemoniatus and probably of Armenia Minor, were not in themselves unusual. Augustus had removed more petty kings in his reign; only the scale in so short a period is perhaps surprising. However, the attempt to explain Gaius' restoration not only of Commagene but of Pontus and Armenia Minor as characteristic of the unbalanced behaviour of a man seeking to enhance his own exalted position by the personal attendance of the client-kings of his empire, is too simplistic. It is significant that Claudius made no attempt to re-possess

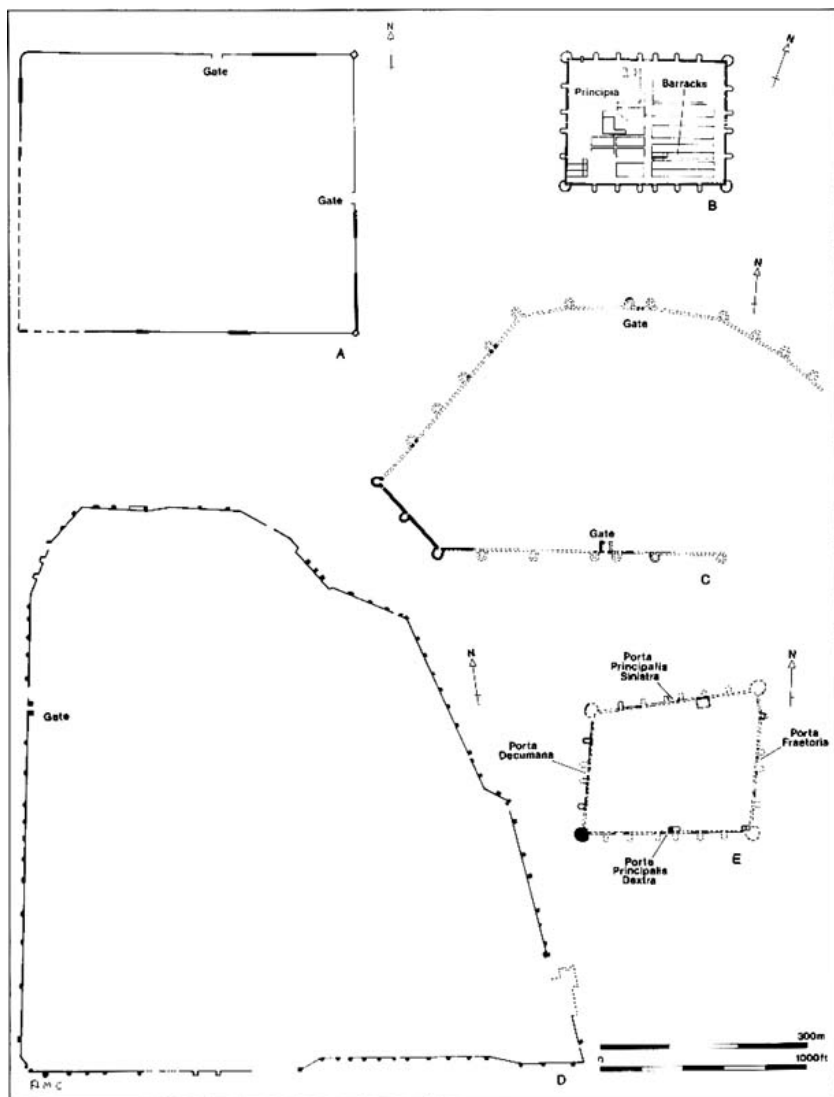


Figure 11.7 Eastern legionary fortresses: (A) Satala (after Mitford); (B) Lejjun (after Brünnow and von Domaszewski); (C) Singara (after Oates); (D) Melitene (after Mitford); (E) Udruh (after Killick)

these territories, but rather returned these kings to their realms; even under Nero in 64 only Pontus Polemoniacus was annexed. The explanation surely lies in the consequences of annexation of these Euphrates states. We know little of Tiberius' arrangements for their security after annexation; they seem to have been given few if any troops, even auxiliaries. Tiberius was fortunate: his largely undefended river frontier faced an Armenia enjoying

a rare period of peace from AD 18–34 under its widely popular King Artaxias III. The latter's death and the brief rule of an Arsacid prince before an Iberian princeling could be installed must surely have been sufficient to indicate that the instability and insecurity of Augustan times were the more predictable state of affairs and that the upper Euphrates must be either returned to the care of native rulers and their forces or provided with a substantial garrison.

In Armenia itself, Claudius not only sent the Iberian Mithridates back from Rome to his kingdom, but bolstered his position with a detachment of Roman soldiers who, for over a decade, were stationed at Gorneae, a few miles from Artaxata. When annexation was again undertaken, it was complemented by the securing of the new territory. Thus, Agrippa II, in a speech set in 66, but possibly anachronistic, mentioned 3,000 legionaries and forty warships in Pontus and Colchis. Certainly, part at least of the royal army was retained in service in Pontus where it is found in 69.

Under Vespasian, matters were taken vigorously in hand. Commagene was again annexed in 72 and given a legionary garrison at Samosata ([pl. 11.1](#)); the rather dubious pretext – a fear that its king was about to allow the Parthians over the river at the vital crossing at Samosata – reveals both the recognition of the strategic importance of the kingdom and the desire to secure the river line. The immediate aftermath of the civil wars and the end of the Jewish Revolt saw Cappadocia transformed into a new important military province with two legions, one of them at Satala in Armenia Minor, re-annexed in 71. The half century from Vespasian to the death of Trajan saw the implementation of the same policy of annexation and provincial reorganization in the south, as petty rulers in Emesa, Ituraea and Nabataea were removed or not replaced.

The quickened pace of activity on the upper Euphrates from the last years of Nero onwards was not, however, stimulated by the belief that Armenia would always be an unstable vassal. Rather, they reflect the changed circumstances which were the outcome of Corbulo's campaigns under Nero. Claudius' military support for Mithridates of Armenia did not protect the latter from the unforeseen ambitions of his murderous Iberian nephew Radamistus. The fluctuating fortunes in the Romano–Parthian War which developed in the wake of this upheaval in Armenia left both parties ready to accept a new compromise. Thus, in 66, Rome was treated to the dramatic public spectacle of the Arsacid prince Tiridates being crowned by Nero as ruler of Armenia. Despite the impression of this brother of the Great King at Nero's feet, and despite Corbulo's restoration of Roman military prestige after the humiliating capitulation of L. Caesennius Paetus

and his army in 62, the new arrangement was a considerable retreat from the policy initiated by Augustus. The half century from 66 until Trajan deposed Parthamasiris in 114 saw a succession of Arsacid kings in Armenia, each nominally vassals of the Roman emperor to whom they owed their crowning and recognition. In fact, they were as much an appanage of the Parthian Empire as Osroene. Whatever the public declarations of the imperial government, privately they knew that the arrangement was a face-saving formula at the end of an inconclusive war. Thus, even before the coronation of Tiridates, steps were being taken to secure the new Armenian frontier with the removal of the king of Pontus. His territory included the important Zigana Pass over the Pontic Alps and that, prior to the building of the great highways to Satala and Melitene in the Flavian period, was the major artery for supplying an army in Armenia from the royal port of Trapezus. The reorganization by Vespasian completed the securing of the upper Euphrates. Trajan's Parthian War put a Roman nominee back on the Armenian throne. The dramatic initial successes, the annexation of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria, and the enthroning of a Parthian puppet ruler in Ctesiphon by the Roman emperor himself, should not obscure the fundamental foolishness of the enterprise. Just as Cassius Dio was to note over a century later in connection with Severus' new province of Mesopotamia (pl. 11.5), so too with the even more extensive new territories of Trajan: they were too distant, their peoples alien, their control a constant drain on Roman resources. For Rome, a Mesopotamian, Armenian or Assyrian province not only stretched military resources but presented immense difficulties of communications: from Antioch, the forces on the Tigris were twice or three times the distance again as formerly the units on the bend of the Euphrates. Hadrian wisely abandoned the new provinces.

The new legionary camps of the period are better known. Satala and Melitene (fig. 11.14) have both been planned and, though of a late design, probably preserve the shape of the Flavian construction. Located away from the great cities of the region both could be purpose-built and are comparable to the better known examples from the west. The same would not be true of Samosata and Seleucia/Zeugma where, significantly, nothing is known of the plans, nor at Jerusalem and Bostra (though the latter may now have been found). Auxiliary units were certainly thrust out into the desert though, with the exception of Azraq (pl. 11.9; fig. 11.8C), Hallabat (pl. 11.10; fig. 11.8E – without towers) and Qreiye (fig. 11.8A), locations are only really known from epigraphic finds.

Hadrian's rapid abandonment of territory beyond the Euphrates did little

to assuage the humiliated Parthians; nor, in fact, did it restore the *status quo ante*. The ‘scare’ of c. 123 which set reinforcements marching and brought Hadrian to Syria to negotiate continued peace (pl. 11.8), and the two crises under Antoninus, emphasize how much the settlement of 117 had been to Rome's advantage. Not only had Armenia returned to Rome vassaldom but now the kings of Osroene too were again dependent on Rome. The spectacular explosion of Parthian frustration and rage when it came in 162 took

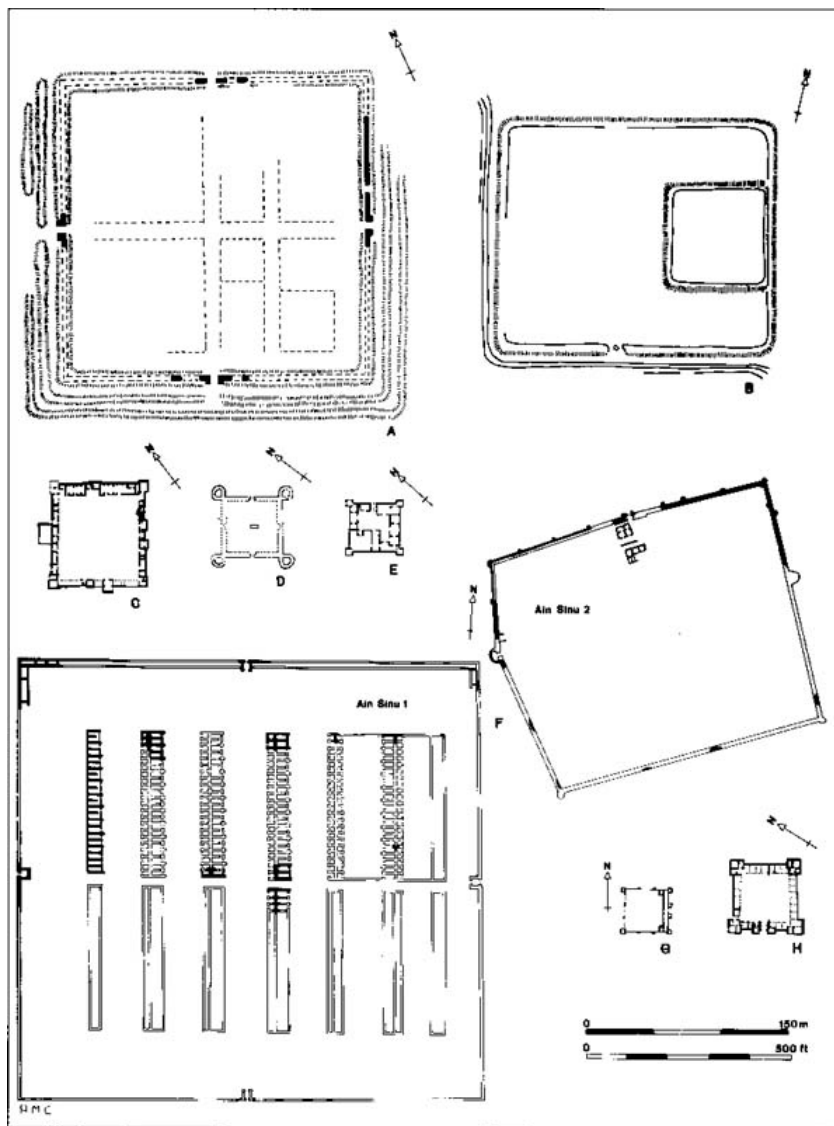


Figure 11.8 Forts of the eastern frontier: (A) Qreiyeh (after Poidebard); (B) Hirbet Hassan Aga (after Poidebard); (C) Qasr el-Azraq (after Kennedy); (D) Han al-Abyad (after Poidebard); (E) Qasr-el-Hallabat (after Kennedy); (F) Ain Sinu 1 and 2 (after Oates); (G) Eski Hissar (after Wagner); (H) Qasr Bshir (after Brünnow and von Domaszewski)

one army into Syria, while another destroyed the governor of Cappadocia and a legion at Elegeia in Armenia.

The efficiency of the Roman response, essentially a repeat of Trajan's strategy, was impressive, perhaps because the threat raised recently under

Antoninus Pius (*ILS*, 1076) had pushed Rome to formulate a plan. Large reinforcements, some from as far as the lower Rhine, were collected, and the inexperienced L. Verus provided with able field-commanders: Statius Priscus (called from his governorship in Britain), Avidius Cassius, P. Martius Verus and M. Claudius Fronto. In 163–4 Priscus subjugated Armenia, destroyed Artaxata and elements at least of the German *legio I Minervia* seem to have crossed the Darial Pass from Iberia (*CIL*, XIII, 8213). In 165 Edessa and Nisibis were seized and the following year Cassius destroyed Seleucia and Ctesiphon. Also in 166, and possibly for the second time in the war, Roman forces penetrated Media Atropatene.

Far from shifting the balance in Parthia's favour, the war consolidated, even extended, Rome's pre-eminence in the region: the Emesene prince Sohaemus, an ex-consul, became king of Armenia with a supporting Roman force in his new capital, Eḫmiadzin (Kainepolis); a pro-Roman king was installed in Osrhoene and, apparently (p. 283 below), Roman garrisons established along the Khabur river to his east; Hatra and Adiabene may have accepted Roman overlordship; and on the Euphrates the frontier was thrust forward to the fortress city of Dura Europus (pl. 11.7).

For almost a decade after 166 this major reorganization involving the entire eastern frontier was supervised by the Syrian, Avidius Cassius, as governor of Syria until at least 171 and then as *rector totius Orientis*. Whether the Roman support of Sohaemus had been withdrawn or proved too weak, he was expelled in 172. However, an inscription (*ILS*, 9117) records vexillations of both Cappadocian legions under the tribune of a milliary cohort in garrison, in 175, at Kainepolis, which the Cappadocian governor, Martius Verus, is said to have made 'the foremost city of Armenia'. At least one of the vexillations was still there as late as 184–5 (*ILS*, 394), and, perhaps again under Commodus, a road link back to Satala was being built, or rebuilt (*CIL* III, 13627A).

The Jewish Revolt of 66–70 (pl. 11.2) wrought important changes in the military dispositions in the east. In 70 a new and undoubtedly larger auxiliary force had to be found for the province and *X Fretensis* became the first legionary garrison. Fortunately Corbulo had raised new units for the recent Parthian War and the end of the civil wars allowed *IV Scythica* and a new legion, *XVI Flavia*, to be based in the east. The absorption of the armies of client-states also provided an injection of new manpower for use there. The Flavian distribution of forces from Satala to Jerusalem, transformed the Julio–Claudian legions, all in northern Syria, and still a relatively mobile field force, into a defensively oriented garrison.

Fortunately for Rome, Parthia chose not to exploit Rome's preoccupation

with either the revolt or the civil war. Indeed, in 70, Vologeses I offered Vespasian the use of 40,000 cavalry. Five years later, he made the remarkable proposal that they should mount a joint expedition against the Sarmatian Alans north of the Caucasus. Previously, it was Parthia alone which had experienced their ravages: in 35, when Iberia, at Rome's suggestion, invited them southwards to attack Media, and in 72 when they raided south-wards from east of the Caspian and returned home over the Caucasus. Nevertheless, the apparent concern underlying Nero's planned Caucasian expedition persisted in the Flavian period and precautions were taken: some of the forts on the Colchis coast are probably Flavian in origin; in 75 Roman troops were helping the king of Iberia fortify his major stronghold at Harmozica which controlled the southward egress from the Caucasian Gates/Darial Pass (*SEG*, XX (1964), 122); under Domitian, a centurion of *XII Fulminata* cut an inscription (*AE* (1951) 263) on a rock face at a point overlooking the Caspian and controlling the exit of the Caspian Gates/Debend Pass. Not least, perhaps, because of these measures, Rome did not have any clash with the Alans until c. 134 when, returning from another raid into Parthia, they were repulsed by the governor of Cappadocia, Flavius Arrianus, who has left his account in his 'Battle Order Against the Alans'.

As in so many other areas, the policies of Septimius Severus in the east can be traced back to Marcus Aurelius. The first of his two Parthian Wars, in 195, may have been cut short by the need to return westwards to confront the usurper Clodius Albinus; certainly the victory titles – Parthicus Arabicus, Parthicus Adiabenicus – imply war against former Parthian vassals alone. While the war may have been seen as an opportunity for welding together recent civil war opponents, and for restoring the morale of an eastern army recently decimated – 20,000 of them are said to have been killed at the final battle of Issus – but with many new recruits, it was also required to restore Roman dominance in Mesopotamia. According to Cassius Dio, taking advantage of the civil war, the Osrhoeni and Adiabeni 'revolted' and laid siege to Nisibis. Although this is the first indication of the extent of Roman pre-eminence in northern Mesopotamia and even of garrisons, they probably date back to 166 or at least to Marcus Aurelius' own visit and final reorganization after the short-lived usurpation of Avidius Cassius in 175. It seems likely that north-west Mesopotamia, like Armenia, was subjected by Marcus to what Dilleman has called 'occupation sans annexion'.

Until very recently, scholars were divided about the treatment of Osrhoene. A province of Osrhoene is soon heard of (*ILS*, 1353) but equally,

the monarchy persisted or was restored to be heard of under Severus' successor. Wagner's discovery of remarkable new texts resolves the problem: one, for 195, is a boundary stone set up by the procurator C. Julius Pacatianus 'between the province of Osrhoene and the kingdom of Abgar'. The rump kingdom seems to have consisted of no more than Edessa and its territory, the province probably being garrisoned by a new *legio (III?) Parthica*, perhaps at Nisibis.

The Second Parthian War (197–8) was aimed at Parthia itself. Ctesiphon was sacked but Severus was twice frustrated in his attempts to capture Hatra. This second war



Figure 11.9 Eastern frontier provinces at the death of Severus (AD 211)

and the return of troops withdrawn to face Albinus, provided the opportunity for a major reorganization. Beyond the Euphrates, Osroene was complemented by a new military province, Mesopotamia, established,

probably in 197, and unexpectedly placed under an equestrian prefect with two newly formed legions at his disposal (pl. 11.5). The whereabouts of *I* and *III Parthicae* under Severus, is not clear: Singara (fig. 11.7C) and Nisibis are likely, but, at a later date, coins of Resaina name *III Parthica* (Castelin, 1946). After the second war, Osrohoene would no longer have needed its own legion: in 197 it is *IV Scythica* which is found building a fort there at Eski Hissar on the road linking Zeugma and Samosata (pl. 11.1 and fig. 11.10); and in 205, a road was built

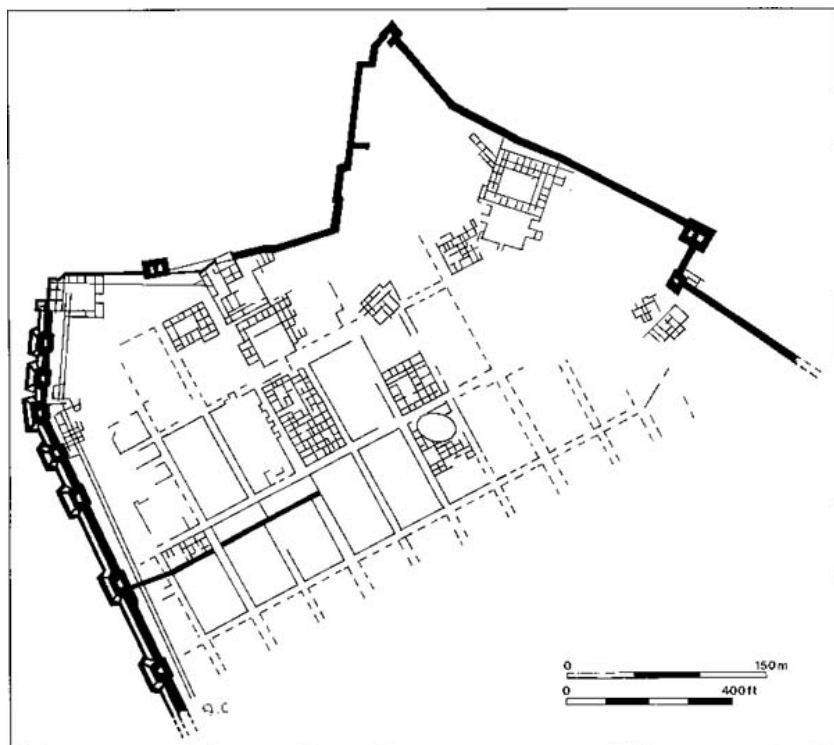


Figure 11.10 Dura-Europus, Syria, was occupied by Roman forces during the Parthian campaigns of Lucius Verus; it retained a large and growing garrison, including legionary vexillations, until its loss to Sapor in the 250s. The army was quartered in the northern end of the city, cut off from the town by a wall, and utilizing some existing buildings, for military purposes, until it was formalized to some extent after AD 210. Such must have been the practice in many eastern towns from the Republic onwards, purpose-built camps being rare or only a late development (after Perkins)

‘from the Euphrates as far as the boundaries of the kingdom of Septimus Abgar’ (Wagner, 1983, 115).

The repercussions of the wars and the new provinces were bound to be

considerable. No longer the major frontier province, Syria was divided into Coele with two legions and Phoenice with one; part of the latter was soon detached and added to Arabia. The rationale for legions at Samosata and Zeugma no longer existed and, though we do not know when they moved, it is notable that detachments of both were in garrison far to the south-east at Dura already under Severus (fig. 11.10). New auxiliary units for Mesopotamia, probably including *Cohors IX Maurorum* and *XII Palaestinorum*, are likely. From Dura too comes the remarkable letter of c. 208 from the governor, advising the garrison commander to prepare to receive a Parthian envoy through the city and its dependent outposts. A tantalizing and all too rare insight into the mechanism of the largely unknown but presumably regular contacts between the two empires.

Inscriptions show Severus active elsewhere along the eastern frontier, the best attested being in north-east Arabia. There, just as was happening in Numidia and Tripolitania in the same reign (Chapter 10), garrisons were thrust out into the desert, in this case to seize the important Azraq oasis and possibly even that at Jauf 400 km (250 miles) to the south-east at the end of the great Wadi Sirhan route. At the former a fort and outposts were built and a road constructed linking the oasis back to the Syrian *limes* (fig. 11.9).

The eastern aims of Severus' half-Syrian successor Caracalla are unclear. The known details suggest a vigorous pursuit of his father's policy. In the north there was a short-lived attempt to annex Armenia, where the client-kingship was restored by the next emperor, Macrinus. The rump of Osrhoene was annexed in 215 and Edessa, just as Singara, Nisibis and Resaina had been under his father, declared a *colonia*. When Caracalla was assassinated before it was fully under way his apparently unprovoked Parthian expedition had to be terminated after a reverse and on unfavourable terms by Macrinus.

The early Severan period saw the climax of Roman military power in the east (fig. 11.9, 11.18 and pl. 11.5). To be sure, victories followed in the succeeding generations and new territories were acquired, but crisis and disaster soon followed in the third century and Rome's dominance in the area was never again as clear as it must have seemed in 217 when Caracalla had proposed an Alexander-like fusion of Roman and Iranian, himself to marry the Great King's daughter. The explanation is not hard to find: the Arsacids of Parthia were no longer the thrusting successful dynasty of two centuries before, and now successive humiliations at the hands of Roman armies, together with internal division, left them weak and vulnerable. The crisis reached a head in the later Severan period when a rising, begun some years before in the province of Persia, led to the Arsacids' downfall c. 214

and the establishment of a neo-Persian dynasty, the Sasanians (fig. 11.11).

The weakness of Arsacid Parthia explains in large part the relative ease of Severus'

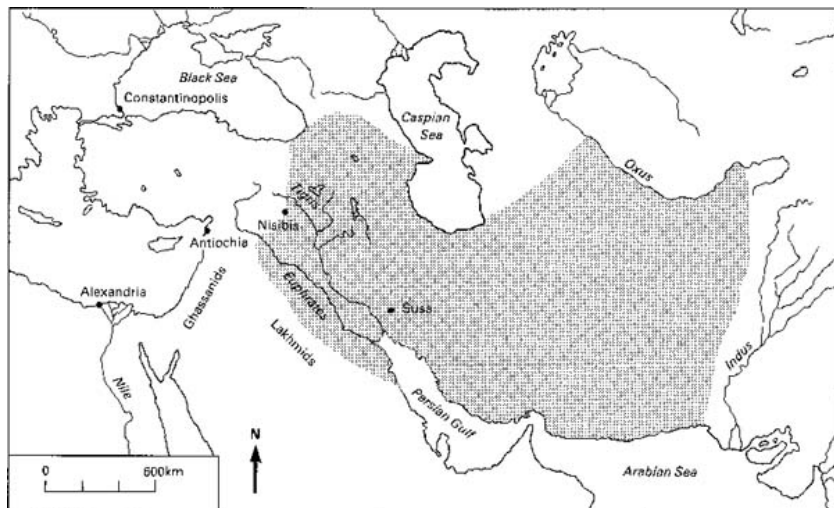


Figure 11.11 Sasanian Empire

victories. The early Sasanian rulers, vigorous and able men, motivated by religious zeal and national pride to strengthen their empire and recover the lands of Achaemenid Persia (figs 11.5 and 11.11) overthrown by Alexander the Great, were a tough opponent. Ironically, and unfortunately for Rome, Ardashir, the first of the new dynasty, faced not Septimius Severus or even the militaristic Caracalla, but the weak and inexperienced Severus Alexander, last of his dynasty. Sapor I, a greater threat still, could exploit not only the growing internal strife of the Roman world and its preoccupations on its European frontiers, but easily outclassed the emperors pitted against him: the nineteen-year-old Gordian III, in 244 after the untimely death of his able father-in-law and praetorian prefect, Timesitheus, and later the ageing, vacillating and ineffectual Valerian.

From the moment of the first Persian invasion of Mesopotamia in 230 until the invasion of Babylonia by Carus in 283, Rome was on the defensive, the military situation rapidly deteriorating. The course of the campaigns waged by Severus Alexander were, at best, mixed, one of the three divisions of his army apparently being defeated. They achieved enough, however, to eject the Persians, restore peace and free the European reinforcements, together now with detachments from the east, for the more critical threat then posed closer to Italy by the tribes on the Rhine. That

minor raids at least continued in the east, may be inferred from the happy discovery at Dura Europus of the tombstone of the tribune Julius Terentius (Welles, 1941), recording his death in the course of one such skirmish in 239. By that date, Alexander's short-lived successor, Maximinus Thrax, was heavily involved on the Rhine. In 242, a new emperor Gordian III took the field in person against a renewed Persian attack. Under the guidance of Timesitheus, the Persians were thrown back in battles at Resaina and Nisibis, but the prefect's death left affairs in the hands of Gordian at the moment when the Roman offensive was about to begin. For the events which follow, for once we do not have to rely on Roman sources alone. The remarkable trilingual inscription, '*Res gestae divi Saporis*' throws fascinating light on both this and Sapor's two subsequent wars with Rome. In the Great King's account, the claim to have killed Gordian in a major battle in 244 at a site just inside Persian territory and renamed Perosapor (= 'Victory of Sapor') may be closer to the truth than the commonest Roman tradition which placed the blame on the emperor's successor Philip. Certainly Sapor's claim, not reported elsewhere and indicative of the scale of the disaster and the changed fortunes, to have received a ransom of half a million *denarii* from Philip for prisoners, cannot be invented. Although the war seems to have been ended without territorial loss, Sprengling may be correct in view of the sequel in suggesting that Philip was forced to concede Sapor a free hand in Armenia against its Arsacid kings. Certainly, at some time between 244 and 253, perhaps in 252, Armenia came under Persian control.

The year 253 was undoubtedly one of the blackest in Roman military history. There was civil war in Europe, Trebonianus Gallus and his brief successor Aemilius Aemilianus were both overthrown, Valerian and Gallienus proclaimed emperor, all against a back-cloth of Gothic invasions of Thrace and Moesia, incursions into Asia Minor and catastrophe in Syria. The pretext for Sapor's second war, an alleged 'wrong' done to Armenia by 'Caesar', may allude to a Roman refuge for the Armenian pretender Tiridates and possibly their failure to pay the subsidy for the defence of the Caucasian passes. The Persian attack was dramatic and astonishingly successful: 'And we made an attack upon the Roman's Empire and slaughtered the Roman's force, 60,000, at Barbalissus.' Then follow the names of thirty-six 'castles and cities' taken then or in the subsequent campaigns of this same war. Antioch itself is listed, its loss proven by the break in minting there at that time; the captive population of the greatest city of the east after Alexandria, carried off into Persia to inhabit Sapor's new city Veh Antiok Shapur/Gundeshapur: 'Sapor (has made it) Better than

Antioch.' The other names are largely a roll-call of the major cities of Syria: Beroea, Apamea, Zeugma, Seleucia, Cyrrhus, Alexandria, Hama....

Undoubtedly a severe defeat for the army of Syria, it must nevertheless be supposed that many of the forts, and possibly their garrisons, escaped in 253 when the invasion followed the south, more lightly guarded, bank of the Euphrates. However, to the fortress at Zeugma lost in that campaign (if still garrisoned) the next three years added many more losses: Dura, perhaps lost briefly in 253 (pl. 11.7 and fig. 11.10), was destroyed in 256/7 and never re-occupied; Circesium was captured and, in a raid into

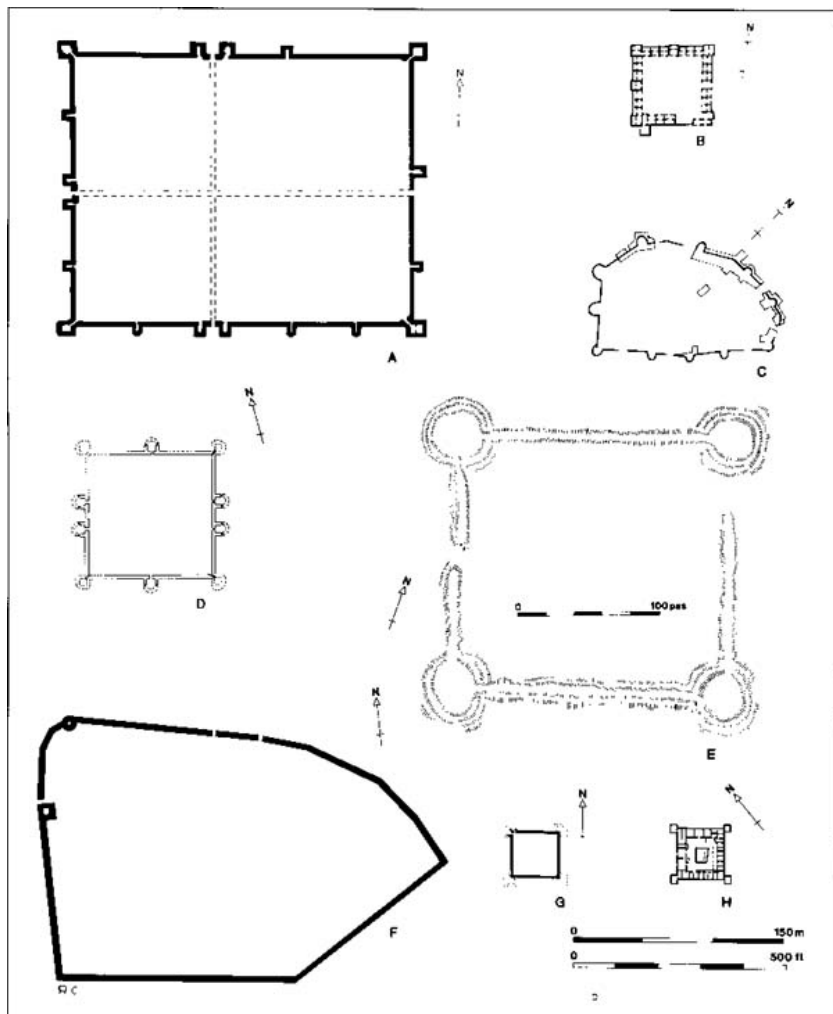


Figure 11.12 Forts of the eastern frontier: (A) Absarus (*after Levkinaze*); (B) Deir el-Kahf (*after Butler*); (C) Pagnik Öreni (*after Harper*); (D) Han al-Manqoura

(after Poidebard); (E) Phasis (after Dubois de Montpéroux); (F) Çit Harabe (after Mitford); (G) Qasr el-Quweira (after Alt); (H) Tamara (after Gichon). All are to the same scale except Phasis, where the only record refers to distance in *pas*. No English equivalent can be found for this Russian measurement

Cappadocia, Satala, together with some frontier forts, was taken. At the same time as these disasters, the Borani, a tribe settled north of the Black Sea, having been repulsed at Pityus *c.* 253–4 in an attempt to invade Pontus through Colchis, returned *c.* 255–6 with stunning results: Pityus fell and Trapezus, massively reinforced by perhaps as many as 10,000 men, was sacked.

Sapor initiated one further war *c.* 259–60 culminating in the humiliating seizure of Valerian and the possible defeat of his army, said by the inscription to be 70,000 strong, near Edessa:

And Valerian Caesar himself with (our) own hand(s) (we) made captive. And the rest, the praetorian prefect, (and) senators, and generals, (and) whoever of that force were officers, all (these) we made captive, and away to the Persis we led. And Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia (we) burned with fire, laid waste and led captive. And we took in that war from the Romans' Empire ... altogether cities with their surroundings on all sides 36. And people who are of the Romans' Empire, non-Aryans, captive we led away; in the Aryans' Empire, in Persis, Parthia, Khuzistan, Assyria and others, land by land, where our own and our father's and our grandfathers' and our forebears' foundations were, there we settled (them).

Although Sapor lived on until 270, this expedition, with its capture of Valerian, a second sack of Antioch, and the subsequent penetration of his forces into Galatia marked the high point of his achievements against Rome. The glorious campaign was soon overshadowed by two of Valerian's generals, Callistus and Macrianus, who defeated elements of the Persian army in Cilicia and, as his army retired, the Palmyrene noble, Odaenathus mounted a successful attack on it near the Euphrates. Tragically, the Roman generals proclaimed the sons of Macrianus – Macrianus and Quietus – in opposition to Gallienus and, after the latter's defeat of the Macriani in Thrace, Odaenathus, still loyal to the legitimate emperor, destroyed Callistus and Quietus in Syria. Unable to act himself, Gallienus was content to appoint the Palmyrene, now self-proclaimed 'King of kings' (possibly a calculated insult to Sapor), as *dux* and *corrector totius Orientis* to oversee reorganization and pursue the Persian War. Before his murder in 267,

Odaenathus had not only recovered much of Mesopotamia but advanced to Ctesiphon. His widow Zenobia, acting for their son Vaballathus, was much less ready to accept her inferior role as appointed client-ruler and, after Gallienus had apparently sent an unsuccessful force under Heraclianus to remove her, she extended her control over all of the Roman garrisons from Egypt to Asia Minor. The later assumption of the titles Augusta and Augustus for mother and son were a direct challenge to Gallienus' successors in the west but one which had to be overlooked until Aurelian, in 272, could bring an army to the east. Although swiftly overthrown, the episode of Zenobia's brief empire and the final battles further decimated the Roman forces, which had survived Sapor and the revolt of Macrianus. Indeed, the queen boasted that Aurelian's early victories in the east cost no Palmyrene blood, only the demoralized Roman troops of the area being employed. After its brief rebellion in 273, Aurelian garrisoned the shattered Palmyra, placing there a new legion, *I Illyricorum* (pl. 11.8).

The rise and fall of Palmyra, however, had other consequences. In the deserts of southern Syria a tribal confederation now appeared. These tribes, the Tanukh, had recently migrated north-west to the Roman frontier under their leader Jadhima. The latter is said by early Islamic writers to have been humiliated and killed by Zenobia and it is his successor, Amr ibn Adi, whom they credited with the overthrow of Palmyra. That these tribes, jealous and fearful of Palmyrene power, assisted Aurelian, is likely and borne out by the exaggerated claims of the Arab tradition. More important in the longer term was the political realignment of the tribes in this region. The Palmyrene episode not only revealed the potential of an Arab confederation but underscored the group security of closer alliances. Under Amr ibn Adi and his son Imru' lqais, the Tanukh was apparently converted into the great tribal confederation based at al-Hira west of the lower Euphrates under the powerful Lakhmid dynasty. The extent and power of this confederation may be judged from the famous tombstone inscription of Imru'lqais who died in 328 and was buried at Nemara, a former Roman fort in the Hauran (MacAdam, 1980). He is described there as 'King of all the Arabs' and his empire is seen to extend across the entire desert from the Hauran to the lower Euphrates and south into the Arabian peninsula. While the origin of his royal title is unknown and his relationship to and independence of Rome and Persia are much in debate, it is tempting to link his rise and role with the Diocletianic overhaul of the frontier.

The ancient sources are unanimous in attributing the major reorganization of the eastern defences to Diocletian. Certainly Diocletian's work can be seen extensively all around the Empire, developed,

supplemented or modified by Constantine, the two long reigns providing the political stability necessary. An important factor in their success was the very changed condition of Persia and her declining fortunes in war. The long reigns of Ardashir and Sapor I gave way to six monarchs in the thirty-nine years between 270 and 309, followed by the long minority of Sapor II from 309. Moreover, there is a suggestion that Aurelian already in 272 may have defeated a Persian force sent to help Zenobia; certainly Probus was confident enough to refuse gifts sent by Vahram II; in 283 Carus sacked both Seleucia and Ctesiphon; in 288 Diocletian restored the Arsacid Tiridates III to Armenia and obliged Vahram to renounce his claim to Mesopotamia, perhaps even to Armenia; finally, in 297, after an initial disaster, the Caesar Galerius crushed the new Great King Narses, receiving by the subsequent treaty, recognition that Mesopotamia was Roman, Armenia a Roman vassal, and acquiring five small Persian satrapies across the Tigris. Only in 334 was the peace seriously broken again.

The respite was employed to good effect. The great *strata Diocletiana* running from Sura on the Euphrates via Palmyra to Damascus linked on to the *via nova Traiana* in Arabia, and broadly marking the crust of new and rebuilt forts from Circesium to Aila. A branch ran further east of the Hauran through Imtan to the Azraq oasis which seems to have been strongly held for some half a century from Diocletian's time (pl. 11.9). The great frequency and strength of the new posts provided enhanced security for the garrisons and a tighter control of the frontier zone (pl. 11.9, 11.11 and 11.12; fig. 11.9).

Little enough is known from contemporary evidence for the army on the eastern frontier in the early fourth century. There are no auxiliary diplomas after the late second century and military inscriptions, comparatively rare in the eastern provinces in earlier times became even scarcer. New legions were introduced: *I Pontica* at Trapezus (*ILS*, 639), and the recent Tetrarchic date from the excavations at Lejjun/Betthoro (pl. 11.11) in Arabia, supports the Diocletianic origin for *IV Martia* (Parker, 1982). Then, if not before, legions were moved forward on to the frontier, usually in pairs in new smaller provinces. Thus, while the two early imperial legions remained at Satala and Melitene, *XVI Flavia* and *IV Scythica* moved forward to Sura (pl. 11.3) and Orisa, *III Gallica* at Danaba was the pair of *I Illyricorum* at Palmyra, *III Cyrenaica* and *IV Martia* lay in Arabia, and *X Fretensis* was removed from Jerusalem to Aila, to become the only legion in the new Palestina Salutaris.

While some of the legionary movements of Diocletian's time can be deduced from their later locations as given in the *Notitia Dignitatum* one

can be far less confident for the many non-legionary forces recorded there, most known only from that document. One can certainly find an origin for some new auxiliary units from their names. The large numbers of units of *equites* are more difficult, perhaps going back as far as Aurelian both in origin and their settlement in the east. Cavalry of all kinds, lancers, dragoons and horse archers, gradually became more important in the third century. Thus, the *dux Syriae et Euphratensis* in the *Notitia* had ten units of *equites*, two legions, two *alae* and four cohorts under his command on the frontier. Only the two legions and the *cohors I Ulpia Dacorum* can be traced back to before Caracalla, the bulk of the inferable losses almost certainly attributable to the third century chaos.

The renewed warfare with Persia in Armenia at the end of Constantine's reign began auspiciously enough for Rome with the appointment of the emperor's nephew, Hannibalianus, as king of Armenia, and his victory in 336 over the Persians who had removed the legitimate king and occupied the country. The major warfare took place further south, however, where the Caesar Constantius had been sent in 334, and it was on him as Augustus that the brunt of Sapor II's (309–79) aggressive thrusts fell.

In contrast to those of many of his predecessors and even to that of his successor Julian, the Persian War of Constantius, recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus, who served there under both Constantius and Julian, appears an inglorious, uninspiring period in Roman military history, culminating soon after his death in the disaster and death of Julian and the shameful peace concluded by Jovian in 363. Apart from a bloody and ultimately drawn battle at Singara-Hileia ([fig. 11.7C](#)), the wars were largely campaigns



Figure 11.13 Dioceses and provinces according to the *Notitia Dignitatum*

of sieges and varying fortunes. In part the explanation is certainly that the admittedly cautious Constantius, with only the resources of his own sector of the Empire at his disposal for so long, was unable or unwilling to risk too much in a set battle or an over-ambitious invasion of Persian territory.

In part, it is a reflection of the changed character of the frontier provinces where heavily defended fortresses (pl. 11.12) and forts had sprung up and where each side struggled to seize strategic border posts such as Nisibis, Amida and Bezabde, the field armies seldom coming into collision. After his third siege of Nisibis the war abated for a time in 350 as Sapor withdrew from Roman Mesopotamia to confront an invasion by barbarians of his northern frontier. Free again in 358, Sapor began with a demand for Armenia and Mesopotamia, followed in 359 with the capture of Amida. With it went some 6,000 men of its garrison but Sapor's own considerable losses forced his withdrawal. Nevertheless, the frontier was vulnerable as the Persian seizure of Bezabde and Singara in 360 emphasized; indeed, it was Constantius' urgent demand for Julian to send him reinforcements from Gaul which led to the latter's usurpation.

The invasion of Persia by Julian in 363 and his assault on Ctesiphon, recall the glorious campaigns of earlier emperors. What he hoped to achieve is unknown; his death in the war and the decimation of his retreating army proved a disaster. In the same year, his successor Jovian, to salvage something from the war, concluded a Thirty Years Peace which signed away the overlordship of Armenia, Mesopotamia beyond the Khabur, four of the Transtigritane satrapies and even Nisibis: Sapor II gained from Jovian what his namesake had not from his victorious invasions of Syria and Mesopotamia and his capture of a Roman emperor.

Sapor soon began to assert his claim to the overlordship of Armenia and even ejected Sauromaces, the Roman client-king of Iberia. Neither act, whatever the terms of Jovian's peace, could be countenanced by Rome and in 373 Valens' generals defeated a Persian army at Vagobanta. While tension remained high, serious warfare was past. Fortunately Sapor II himself died the year after Valens and his army were destroyed at Adrianople (378).

Ammianus Marcellinus on several occasions mentions the military role of the Saracens, a people whom he located as living in the lands between the Assyrians and the Nile. In 363, soon after setting off downstream from Callinicum, Julian received the offer of aid from 'the princes of the Saracens' which he was glad to accept 'since they were adapted for guerilla warfare'. At subsequent points we hear of Saracens active both on his behalf and against his forces. The retreating army suffered considerably from their raids and it is clear that both sides used and valued their services as scouts and skirmishers. It has recently been argued that these people, whom Ammianus specifically says were those formerly called Scenitae, were now renamed from their own term for confederation, Sirkat (Graf and

O'Connor, 1977), thus emphasizing the new political groupings in the desert and explaining the enhanced power of the nomads. A few years later, under Valens, perhaps in 378 when he left Antioch to confront the Goths in Thrace, Mavia, described as Queen of the Saracens, broke her treaty relationship, invaded Phoenicia and Palestine, and ravaged the provinces as far as the Nile. The curious episode was short-lived as she soon sent troops to help defend Constantinople from the Goths in 378. The contingent is described by Ammianus:

the Saracens are a people 'more adapted to stealthy raiding expeditions than to pitched battles.... One of their number, ... a man with long hair and naked except for a loin-cloth, uttering hoarse and dismal cries, with drawn dagger rushed into the thick of the Gothic army, and after killing a man, applied his lips to his throat and sucked the blood that poured out.'

As for the Goths, in 376 Valens had sent large numbers of those who had been allowed to settle south of the Danube to the east to be formed into new units. To avoid disorder in 378, the *magister militum per Orientum* had them all massacred simultaneously. It was not their first employment in the east; Speidel (1978, 712) has recently argued that *Gothi gentiles* were stationed in the southern Hauran at Imtan by 208 and regularly served in Roman armies thereafter. The loss of so much of the army of the east at Adrianople ensured that Valens' successor, Theodosius, could not do without Goths. After 378, units were withdrawn from the eastern frontier for service in the Balkans and some of the new Theodosian units replacing them may well have been Gothic (Jones, 1973, 1430). The eastern frontier was mercifully quiescent under Theodosius, not just during the major Gothic crisis at the outset of his reign but throughout. Indeed, in 387 occurred an event which might have seemed to resolve finally one of the areas of contention with Persia: Armenia was formally divided, by agreement, between the two powers. Rome received about one fifth which she chose to administer through its existing Armenian satraps as vassals.

In 395 on Theodosius' death, the empire was permanently divided. It is this division which is preserved in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, probably compiled under Arcadius (fig. 11.13). Its lists for the east, unlike the west, probably preserve a close picture of the Roman army as reorganized by Diocletian but with later additions and an unknown number of subsequent losses. It is, consequently, an invaluable document not only for the order of battle on the eastern frontier at the end of the fourth century, but even as a guide to the Diocletianic reform and the extent of the losses of the third

century.

For the extent of the disaster in the mid-third century, the tables tell the story (figs 11.15 and 11.16). Of some 65 auxiliary units on the eastern frontier in the late Antonine period, fewer than half (31) survive in the *Notitia*. More telling still, 80 per cent of these survivors, 24 of 31 units, are in Armenia (44 per cent), Palaestina (20 per cent) and Arabia (16 per cent). In the central sector of the frontier, the principal area of Sasanian activity, there are only five survivors in total in Syria and Osrhoene



Figure 11.14 Eastern frontier provinces at the death of Arcadius (AD 408). The inset shows the early Muslim Empire

Figure 11.15 Pre-Severan survivals in the *Notitia Dignitatum*

Region	Pre-Severan units			Survivals I+II %
	I	II	III	
Britain	21+	0+	0*	30.00
Rhine & Danube	4+	2+	7	8.6
East	15+	10+	6	35.7
Africa	11+	5+	10	22.85
(Other)	2+	0+	3	2.85
Totals	53+	17+	26	100.00

(Adapted from Roxan, 1976, 73–7)

*Units divided as 'certain', 'probable' and 'possible'.

Figure 11.16 Pre-Severan survivals in the east

Region	I <i>Certain</i>	II <i>Probable</i>	III <i>Possible</i>	Total	% I+II	% Empire-wide I+II	c. 150
Armenia	10	1	0	11	44.00	15.71	18
Osroene	1	2	0	3	12.00	4.29	
Mesopotamia	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Syria	1	0	1	2	4.00	1.42	27
Phoenice	0	1	1	2	4.00	1.42	
Palaestina	2	3	3	8	20.00	7.14	13
Arabia	1	3	1	5	16.00	5.72	6*
Total	15	10	6	31	100.00	35.70	64†
(Empire-wide)	53	17	26	96			

(Adapted from Roxan, 1976, 73–7, and Birley, 198b, 40–2)

* Probably too low – 9 or 10 is more likely (cf. Spicidel, 1978, 700).

† Excluding one unit in Bithynia.

Province	Septimius Severus		Notitia Dignitatum	
	Legions	Bases	Legions	Bases
Pontus			I Pontica	Trapezus
Cappadocia/ Armenia	XV Apollinaris XII Fulminata	Satala Melitene	XV Apollinaris XII Fulminata	Satala Melitene
Isauria			II Isaura III Isaura	Not given Not given
Mesopotamia	I Parthica III Parthica	Nisibis ? and Singara ?	I Parthica II Parthica	Constantina Cefa
Osrohoene			(III Parthica IV Parthica	Apatna) Circesium
Syria	XVI Flavia IV Scythica	Samosata Zeugma	XVI Flavia IV Scythica	Sura Orisa
Phoenice	III Gallica	Raphanaea ?	III Gallica I Illyricorum	Danaba Palmyra
Arabia	III Cyrenaica	Bostra	III Cyrenaica IV Martia	Bostra Beththoro
Palaestina	X Fretensis VI Ferrata	Jerusalem Caparcotna	X Fretensis	Aila

Figure 11.17 Comparison of legionary distribution from Severus to the *Notitia Dignitatum*

(8 per cent and 12 per cent respectively). This appallingly high loss has to be placed in context, however. In *c.* 175 there were some 386 auxiliary units in the empire; the *Notitia*, however, records only 96 which may be, or are, pre-Severan in origin – about one quarter. Of these, however, a third are on the eastern frontier which gives it in fact the highest survival rate of the four frontier regions under discussion and compares well, for example, with the Rhine-Danube where the survivors are not quite 9 per cent of the empire-wide survival, less than 1 per cent of the late Antonine figure. In short, although the central Euphrates region suffered very badly, the east fared better in terms of continuity of early empire units than any other frontier. When looking at the legions on the eastern frontier the picture is more remarkable still. Only one legion of the early empire – *VI Ferrata* – is missing from the *Notitia* (fig. 11.17).

The new non-legionary units are very instructive. Every province had regiments of *equites Illyriciani*, which may have been introduced by Aurelian or, more probably, Diocletian. Many local units had been formed: thus there were several regiments of *equites sagittarii indigenae* and the *cohortes XIV Valeria Zabdenorum* and *XV Flavia Carduenorum* point to recruitment in Diocletian's new Transtigritane satrapies.

Province	Augustus	Vespasian	Hadrian	Severus	N.D.
Pontus		2	2	2	1
Cappadocia	[1/2 Galatia?]				2
Isauria					2
Mesopotamia				2	2
Osroene					2
Syria	3/4	3	3	2	2
Phoenice				1	2
Arabia			1	1	2
Palaestina		1	2	2	1
Total	4/6	6	8	10	16

Figure 11.18 Legions on the eastern frontier

The overall size of the eastern army in the *Notitia* is more difficult to gauge. Jones (1973, 1450) calculated 120,500 for the *limitanei*, assuming legions of 3,000 and other units of 500 and 1,000. Even for the time of Diocletian it seems dubious that old auxiliary units and the new units of *equites* should have been so large; certainly, all units must have been much smaller by the end of the century. Nevertheless, the Diocletianic army on the eastern frontier seems certain to have been much larger than that in the late Antonine period.

For almost two and a half centuries more, wars continued between Rome and Persia, only the early fifth century being relatively quiet. Neither Sapor I nor Sapor II achieved the Sasanian ambition of recovering the empire of the Achaemenids; finally, in the early seventh century, Khusrau II did just that, occupying the eastern provinces from Egypt to the Bosphorus. It was too late however; within less than a generation Heraclius had inflicted crushing defeats on Persia and restored the situation only to see many of the same provinces seized by the armies of Islam which then astonishingly went on to conquer Persia itself (fig. 11.18).

For centuries the eastern frontier had presented Rome with a serious and ever growing problem. Dynasts and emperors sought glory there through the humiliation if not overthrow of a worthy opponent. For some, like Mark Antony, it proved the graveyard of their military reputation; for others – Crassus, Gordian III, Valerian and Julian – it saw their death. The account which can be presented of the history and development of the eastern frontier from the literary sources will change only slowly in the years to come; new inscriptions, however, are constantly modifying the picture, while the ‘bones of the red and the white horses’, as Wheeler put it, now

being unearthed from the Caucasus to the Hedjaz by a number of scholars offer the greatest scope for a fuller understanding in the future.



11.1 Aerial view of the Euphrates at Samosata, looking east. This strategic crossing point became the site of a legionary fortress in AD 72 and was occupied by *legio XVI Flavia firma* in the second and early third century



A



B



C

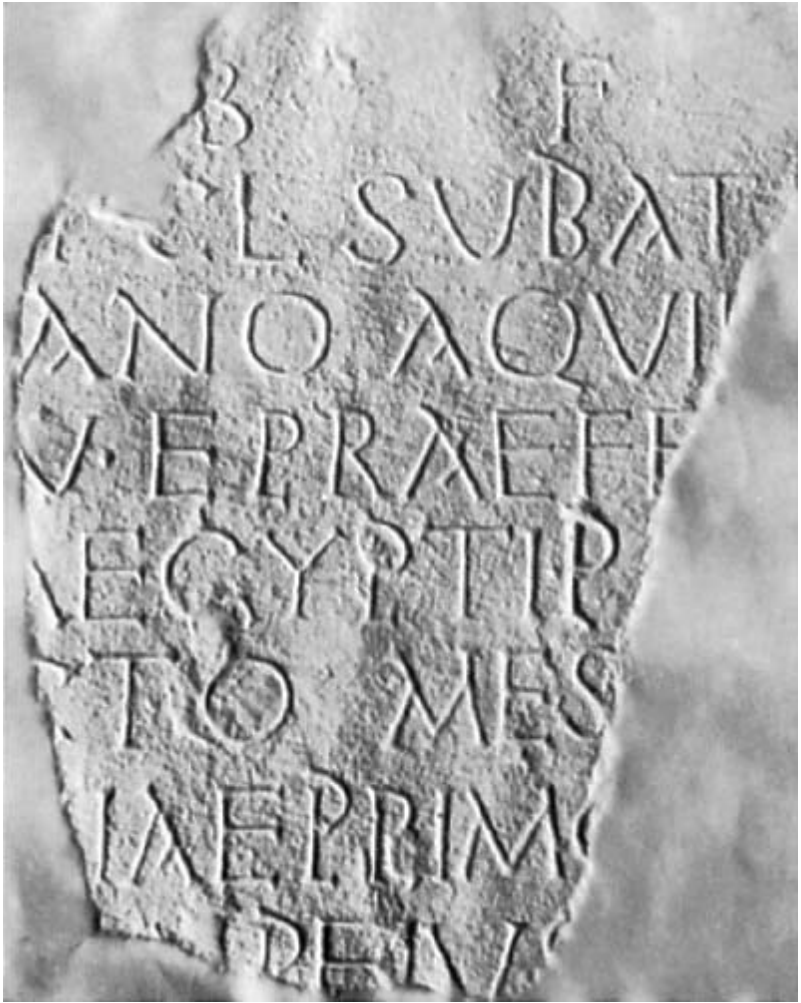


D

11.2 (A-D) Discharge diploma of 7th November, 88 for Syria. Together with the complementary list in another diploma of the same date, they give a list of what must be virtually the entire auxiliary garrison of the province at that time: eight *alae* and nineteen cohorts



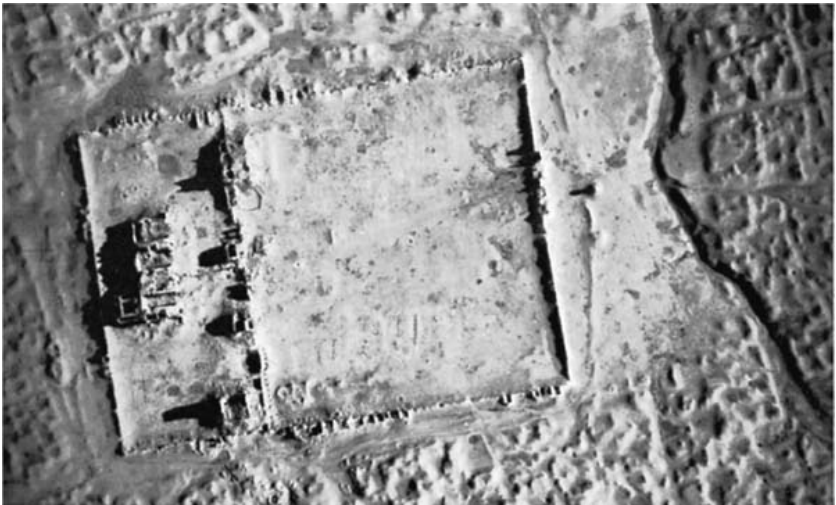
11.3 Aerial view of Sura, Syria, the fortress of *legio XVI Flavia firma* in the fourth century and later rebuilt by Justinian



11.4 A dedication to Good Fortune set up by [Ti. Claudius Subatianus Aquila](#), who was the first prefect of the new province of Mesopotamia, created by Severus c. 198



11.5 Wall and road (?) apparently of Roman origin at Zairwan, Iraq, along the northern slopes of the Jebel Sinjar. It dates presumably either to the time of Trajan, or to the occupation from Severus to Jovian



11.6 Aerial view of Hatra. The earth and stone wall of the circumvallation, 8 km (5 miles) long, presumably belongs to one of the four sieges mounted by Roman or Persian forces. Sacked by Ardashir in 240, it was 'long since abandoned' when Julian passed the site in 363



11.7 Aerial view of Dura-Europos, Syria, a Seleucid military colony of c. 300 BC and later a Parthian stronghold. It was the site of a battle in the first Parthian War of AD 165 and the seat of the *dux ripae* until its fall to Sapor I in his second war. Its best-known garrison was the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*



11.8 Aerial view of Palmyra, Syria. It is the largest oasis of the Syrian desert, situated halfway between Emesa and the Euphrates. The 'Camp of Diocletian' is in the rear right at the foot of the hills beyond the triumphal arch



11.9 Aerial view of Qasr el-Azraq, Jordan. The site commanded a major oasis and controlled seasonal movements of bedouin and caravan traffic along the Wadi Sirhan from the Persian Gulf. A characteristic *tetrapyrgium* is set within the earlier fort of traditional outline. Occupations ranged from AD 208 to 333



11.10 Qasr el-Hallabat, Jordan. The two storeys of the north-west range of rooms as they were in 1929; an inscription refers to the construction of a *castellum novum* under Caracalla; another to reconstruction in 529



11.11 Aerial view of Lejjun, Jordan. The fortress at c. 4.6 ha (15 acres) is only about a quarter of the size of earlier fortresses and suggests accommodation for 1500. With construction dated to c. AD 300, it probably housed the *legio IV Martia*, perhaps formed by Diocletian, and, together with a network of smaller forts and watch-towers, barred passage from the desert. It was abandoned in the mid-sixth century



11.12 El Ula Oasis, ancient Dedan in the Hedjaz, Saudi Arabia. The site is just a few kilometres south of Medain Salih, ancient Hegra, where graffiti record the presence of Roman soldiers of *ala I Gaetulorum* and of *ala dromedariorum* at what had been an important Nabataean site later become, apparently, a Roman frontier post at the entrance to the narrow steep-sided valley

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PART 5

• CITIES • TOWNS • AND •
• VILLAGES •

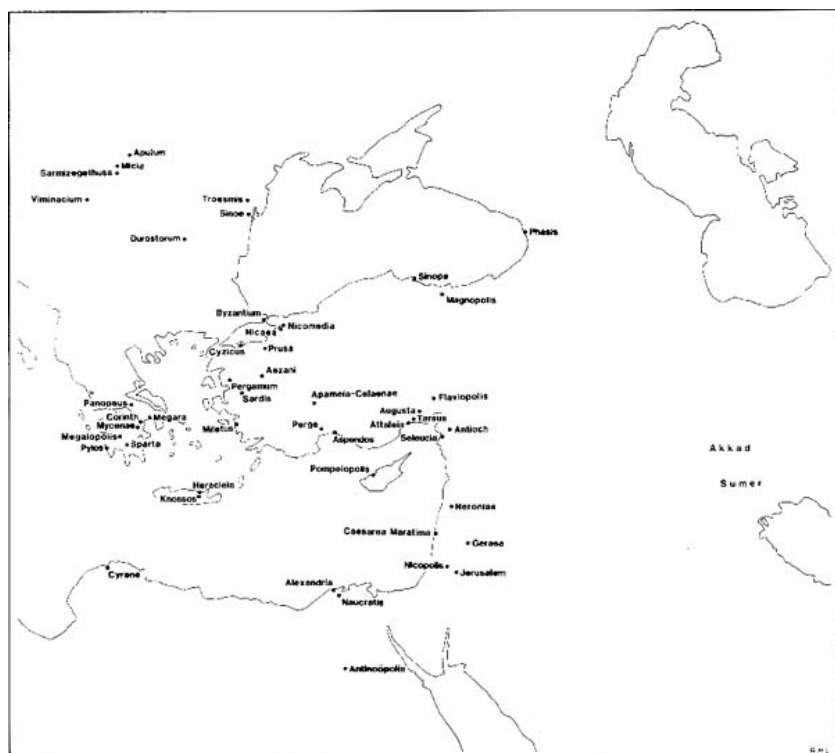


Figure 12.1 The Eastern Empire. Places mentioned in the text of Part 5

• URBANIZATION • IN • THE • • EASTERN • EMPIRE •

Barbara Levick

As the Romans assumed control from the Adriatic to the Euphrates, from the Black Sea to the First Cataract on the Nile, they found themselves dealing with areas organized, below the governmental level, on a tribal, clan, village, township, or city basis. City life had spread with the Greek language unevenly over the entire region. This section is intended to sketch what the Romans inherited by way of urbanization in the eastern provinces: its extent and depth, institutions, political life, and culture, and how far it was preserved and even extended and developed under their aegis as old forms responded to the demands made of them, both by the Romans and by peoples for whom city life was something new.

There had been cities in the beginning, in the east of what was to become the Roman Empire. Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia saw the phenomenon at the start; in the third millennium BC the city states of Sumer and Akkad were attaining sizes of nearly half a million hectares (1¼ million acres) and populations estimated at more than 30,000 (Roux, 1980, 125). Further west the Aegean Bronze Age produced the palace architecture of Knossos, Mycenae, and Pylos, princely centres surrounded by mazes of houses and workshops.

These were not the cities, *poleis*, that made classical Greece, and only exceptionally, as at Athens, did they survive to develop into them. The *polis* was:

a unit of people who a) occupied a territory containing as its central

rallying point a town which held the seat of government and was itself usually clustered round a walled citadel (*acropolis*) which had originally contained the whole settlement and b) had autonomy in that government was provided by and from their own ranks, not from outside (Jeffery, 1976, 39).

The political centre of classical Athens was no longer the *acropolis* but the public buildings in the *agora* (market place). Political control likewise passed from kings to oligarchs and then to the people. Later Greek town planning, with its 'Hippodamian' grid of residential blocks incorporating the central agora and public buildings, canonized the change.

The architect Hippodamus was born about 500 BC at Miletus and into an area already well urbanized. Already in the tenth century Greek settlers from the mainland had come to the west coast of Asia Minor, regaining contact, as Ward-Perkins (1974, 11) indicates, with the architecture of the east. In a second wave of colonization, belonging to the seventh and sixth centuries BC, traditionally also to the eighth, the cities of mainland Greece and the west coast of Asia Minor were sending colonies to the Black Sea, the north coast of Africa, and even the western Mediterranean. Many of the foundations survived to become high-ranking cities in the Roman Empire: Sinope, a Milesian colony; Cyrene, sent from Thera; Syracuse, a Corinthian colony dated by Thucydides as early as 734; Massalia, settled by Phocians; and Byzantium, a colony of Megara.

The Greek sailors occupied coastal sites. How far they penetrated and controlled the hinterland depended on the success of the foundation, the terrain, and the attitude of the natives. In mainland Greece itself there remained regions such as Aetolia that were not urbanized and were organized on a tribal basis even in the fifth century BC (Thucydides I, 5, 3).

The conquests of Alexander gave a fresh impulse to the spread of the Greek city, whether as garrison, veteran settlement, trading centre, cultural beacon, or as an amalgam of all four. Cities named after him, including the great foundation of 332–1 BC on the Canopic mouth of the Nile, which by the first century BC was to have an estimated 300,000 free inhabitants, testify to that. Some were short-lived, but they showed how far afield, even in Afghanistan, a Greek city might be founded. The successors followed Alexander's example. Cities called after the hellenistic monarchs of Macedon, Syria, and Egypt proliferated, although the conferment of a name does not necessarily mean that the monarch responsible made any substantial real change in the community involved. Prime amongst these cities were Antioch on the Orontes, founded in 301, and Seleucia on the

Tigris, which belonged to the same period and was if anything larger than Alexandria. The fact that Antioch and Alexandria, as capital cities, enjoyed dignity beyond those of the normal *polis* under the hellenistic monarchs was to affect the behaviour of their inhabitants when they became subject to Roman rule.

Latecomers in the dramas acted out by the hellenistic monarchs before the advent of Rome at the end of the third century BC were the Attalids of western Asia Minor, but they played a leading part in the closing scenes and made their capital Pergamum into an outstanding example of the hellenistic city, its sculptures now the glory of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. It is to Pergamum, its landscaped architecture and its sense of grandeur, that much of the monumental character of city architecture in the eastern provinces under the Principate is to be traced (Martin, 1956, 184).

The creations of classical colonists and hellenistic monarchs were not all made from scratch; villages could be developed or amalgamated (the amalgamation was called *synoecism*, joint settlement), or the constitution of one existing community might be changed: so Gerasa became Antioch on the Chrysorhoas. Nor were all the developments due to the initiative of monarchs and, later, emperors; the standing that the *polis* enjoyed throughout the Greek world roused the emulation of other communities. Wherever the Greek language penetrated it carried with it a built-in regard for the city, its amenities and institutions.

The institutional requirements of the *polis* were clear: annual magistrates, council, and people in assembly, no matter whether the magistrates were the eponymous *Stephanephorus* (Garland-wearer) and *Strategi* (Generals) or *Demiurge* (Artisan) and *Prytaneis* (Presidents), or how many sat on the council (450 at Ephesus, 500 at Athens, 600 at Marseilles (Massalia), but small cities would have been hard put to reach those figures), or how its composition and powers, and those of the assembly, were regulated. It was equally clear to Pausanias, writing in the second century AD (*Guide to Greece* 10, 4, 1), what amenities the city should possess. He was inclined to deny the title to Panopeus in Phocis, when it lacked state buildings, a training ground (*gymnasium*), theatre, *agora*, and piped water; but he had to admit that it had the organized administration to establish a boundary with its neighbours and to send delegations to the Phocian Assembly. It is this administration of a tract of country under its control that makes the city-state, and in an agricultural economy the amenities of the town are the products of the revenues from the country it administers.

Direct Roman control over the heartlands of Greek civilization, Achaea,

Macedon, and western Asia Minor, dates from the third quarter of the second century BC. One by one other kingdoms and principalities fell into Rome's hands: Cyrene, bequeathed to her in 96 but not taken over until at least twenty years later; the kingdoms of Mithridates Eupator and Nicomedes, Pontus and Bithynia, annexed by Pompey in the late 60s, like the core of the Seleucid kingdom, which became the stipendiary province of Syria. The last and biggest plum hung on the bough, too big for any individual to be allowed to pick, until the very end of the Republic. Indeed its acquisition marked the beginning of Octavian's sole supremacy: Ptolemaic Egypt was finally annexed on the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra VII in 30 BC.

Only the first of Rome's acquisitions, mainland Greece and the province of Asia, were sufficiently urbanized not to present problems. Not all the territories were governed directly as provinces. Augustus allowed some of the smaller principalities to remain under their existing rulers, like Judaea under Herod the Great, or under new rulers, like the kingdom of the Amanus in Cilicia, returned in 20 BC to the son of King Tarcondimotus Philantonius, who had been loyal to his patron. Too insignificant to be dangerous, they were useful in controlling areas where, as Strabo says, a Roman governor could not always be on the spot with an army. In the absence of cities, their direct rule was a cheap alternative. But if these dependent rulers were too successful, or if they failed, or died without leaving a suitable heir, their domains might be annexed: this happened to Galatia in 25 BC after its king was killed fighting hill tribesmen, to Judaea in AD 6 when Herod's heir proved unacceptable to his subjects, to Cappadocia in AD 17, Commagene finally in AD 72, to the Nabataean kingdom in 106 when it was annexed as the province of Arabia.

The alternative was to found cities and charge them with the work of administration, with the maintenance of order at police level, and with keeping up roads and producing taxes. In the wake of his campaigns against the pirates and against Mithridates Eupator, Pompey, like Alexander and the Successors, had founded cities bearing his name or called by his title of Magnus. For reformed pirates he provided a settlement at Soli in Cilicia, restoring the town under the name Pompeiopolis. Then there were backward areas of Mithridates' kingdom, formerly administered directly by the royal officials, to be incorporated in the new province of Bithynia and Pontus. Cities, some with vast territories, were Pompey's solution. In Bithynia they were already in existence and the country could be divided between them; in the interior of Pontus Pompey had to develop three existing towns into cities, create three new cities by synoecism, and

complete Mithridates' undertaking, Eupatoria, which became Magnopolis (cf. Jones, 1940, 57–8).

Caesar did not campaign extensively in the east, nor did he create new provinces there. It was the problems of Italy that brought about a new, peculiarly Roman, development in urbanization: the foundation of colonies. Laus Julia, founded in 44 BC on the site of ruined Corinth and a brilliant success, virtually guaranteed by its position (cf. Robinson's description, in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, of the development of its public buildings during the first three-quarters of a century after its foundation), was not a military settlement but was intended to provide land for dispossessed civilians and the landless poor of Rome and Italy. Exactly the same purpose was served by Octavian's colony at Knossus in Crete: dispossessed landowners of Capua were offered compensation in the colony of Julia Nobilis. Later, when Octavian had to find land for the veterans who had fought in the final civil wars of the Triumviral age, he founded military colonies, thus satisfying his troops' land hunger and at the same time setting up defences against rebels, for instance in central and southern Asia Minor, where the king of Galatia had been killed.

Colonization sometimes caused bad feeling, and an unofficial settlement of Caesar's at Heracleia in Pontus had been annihilated by natives. No such fate overtook the Augustan settlements; conditions were more stable, and the privilege of membership of the new colonies may have been extended to the original inhabitants in return for part of their land. It is a measure of the hold that the Greek language and the institutions of the *polis* had, even on comparatively unhellenized districts, that Greek began to intrude into the private and even the public inscriptions set up in the colonies and Greek games into their entertainments (cf. Levick, 1967, 130 ff.). Certainly the presence of legions and of unofficial settlements of Italian businessmen in the east had more effect on the culture and language of less hellenized areas than the foundation of military colonies, scattered as they were.

Augustus was the heir of Pompey as well as of Caesar, and a founder of Greek cities. Most famous is Nicopolis, on the site occupied by his army during the battle of Actium. Sweeping up the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, he brought them together in one *polis* which as an administrative centre replaced the Leagues of Aetolians and Acarnanians. Elsewhere in the east cities are found named Sebaste after him (Sebastus was used as the equivalent of Augustus) or incorporating the word in their titles. Permission for that would presumably be granted only if there had been some genuine, if minor, connection between emperor and city, a benefaction conferred on it by way of material aid, privilege, or exemption.

Towns were also named in Augustus' honour by the dynasts, like Juliopolis on the borders of Galatia and Bithynia, the former Gordioucome (*come* means *village*), renamed by the condottiere Cleon Juliopolis; it remained insignificant, but other important foundations were made by potentates who knew what would win approval: Caesarea Maritima in Judaea, with its harbour Sebastus, founded near an old Phoenician port by Herod the Great and intended for Greeks since it contained the temples and monuments that made a Greek city and were repugnant to Jews.

In the east, then, the Romans, who had embarked on direct rule with an appalling act of vengeance, the destruction of Corinth in 146 BC and who had sacked Athens sixty years later in the course of restoring their supremacy after the retreat of Mithridates, came to be strenuous promoters of the *polis* and generous in acceding to petitions from native communities which sought advancement to that status. They lacked the means to implement a new system even if they could have devised one. Then there was their leaders' ingrained passion for glory: in the east at least Pompey, Caesar, Augustus, and all their successors were the heirs of Alexander and the hellenistic monarchs. Self-interest was enlightened by education; Roman politicians were versed in the literature that the cities, especially Athens, had produced. Two and a half centuries after the subjection of mainland Greece the younger Pliny wrote to a friend, sent there on a special mission, to remind him that he was dealing with Greeks in the truest sense and should show them respect.

With its long history of urbanization and hellenization, it is not surprising that the east could eventually show cities equal in numbers to the nine hundred of Africa, Iberia, and Italy combined (Hopkins, 1978, 70), more than three hundred of them in the province of Asia. The advance of urbanization after Augustus, leaving its traces in the nomenclature of the cities, may be charted in miniature in the hinterland of Cilicia and in Galatia on the central plateau of Anatolia (Jones, 1971, 204 and 119). In Cilicia the tribal districts that had probably been under the Tarcondimotid dynasty became the territories of three cities: Augusta, founded in AD 20, Neronia (52), and Flaviopolis, which took the family name of Vespasian in 74. Amongst the three Galatian tribes it is a change of nomenclature that Jones notices. On coins and inscriptions they began by referring to themselves by their tribal names, Tectosages, Trocmi, and Tolistobogii; then the names of the towns in their territories (old Phrygian centres; Pessinus was devoted to the cult of the Great Mother) were brought in: the coins come to be ascribed to Ancyra of the Tectosages, and so on; finally the tribal name itself could be omitted.

The developments would not have been possible without heavy capital investment in the cities, for buildings and organization, in which both emperors and provincials were involved. The part consciously played by the government both directly and indirectly is easier to distinguish than efforts made by the cities and their inhabitants on the basis of increasing prosperity in the Roman peace.

The central government could directly and materially affect the welfare of communities, if only marginally in most cases, by founding new cities, adorning existing ones, maintaining them and restoring them after disaster, as the senate in AD 17 relieved twelve cities of Asia ruined by earthquake and as Domitian in 93–4 restored a portico at Megalopolis in Arcadia after it had been destroyed by fire (McCrum and Woodhead, 1961, 436). It could also operate indirectly by conferring grants of status and privilege. It was the more important cities in a province that became assize centres and so benefited not only from the prestige which that position brought but also from the material advantages of having:

an unnumbered throng of people, litigants, jurymen, orators, princes, attendants, slaves, pimps, muleteers, hucksters, harlots, and artisans; consequently, not only can those who have goods to sell obtain the highest prices, but nothing in the city is out of work, neither the teams nor the houses nor the women.

So Dio of Prusa on the Phrygian assize centre of Apameia-Celaenae; not surprisingly it had six well-known and nine ‘inconsiderable’ cities attached to it. Similar advantages accrued to a city that had been granted permission, by the emperor, to hold ‘Sacred’ Games ranking with those of Delphi and Olympia; the importance of its games is stressed by Strabo in his description of Nicopolis. Likewise in AD 26 there was fierce competition between eleven cities of Asia for the privilege of building a temple to the emperor and so becoming *neocorus* or temple warden as Pergamum already was, great though the capital outlay and cost of maintenance must have been. Both the position of assize centre and possession of a temple of the provincial cult were bones of contention between Tarsus and other cities of Cilicia. So Rome could exert its power and regulate the flow of wealth to some extent.

Profound peace, interrupted only by local outbreaks and lasting in the eastern provinces from the battle of Actium until the civil war between Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger in 193–4, was the factor underlying the efflorescence of the cities. More potent, if Hopkins (1980) is

to be believed, was the imposition of taxes, which helped to monetize the economy; but that would only be true where dues were not payable in kind. Certainly the conquest of new provinces such as Dacia and their opening up as markets produced more wealth for subject areas of longer standing; so too did the establishment of a stable market in the form of legions stationed on the lower Danube, on the Euphrates, and within the provinces of Syria, Judaea, and Egypt. What emperors could do was to recognize and marginally to enhance achievements that the prevailing conditions of the Empire made possible for the cities. Nero 'freed' the Greeks and was their declared friend; but he could not improve the condition of Greece.

Up to a point the Empire was an economic unit, but local conditions varied; one city might be outstripped, even swallowed up by another, as Myus was by its huge neighbour Miletus, and over whole provinces new factors, such as the placing of a garrison army or the rerouting of a main channel of communication, might have a profound effect. The depopulation of Greece was a subject of concern to Polybius in the second century BC and at the end of Augustus' reign the provinces of Achaea and Macedonia were complaining of their poverty and their inability to meet their tax obligations. Nero's speech, and Dio of Prusa's essay on Euboea paint the same picture. Remote now from the Balkan legions and unable to compete in the production of wine and oil with Italy, Asia Minor, and Spain, Greece became something of a backwater.

It was in the early part of Vespasian's reign that administrative changes were made that reflected and contributed to a gradual increase in the importance of the Danubian provinces and Bithynia-Pontus, though not necessarily at the expense of Asia. With Commagene finally annexed and Cappadocia united with Galatia in a province guarded by legions, and Dacia becoming a province in 106, there came new economic opportunities. As Pliny's correspondence with Trajan shows, the cities of Bithynia and Pontus were not able to cope with the improvement in their fortunes, and there was an outbreak of ill-considered expenditure on new and restored amenities; an aqueduct, theatre, gymnasium, and bath are mentioned within the space of two letters from the governor and Trajan's replies. Taken with the dissensions apparent from the *Discourses* of Dio of Prusa (38–50), it suggests heightened rivalry and perhaps the advance of new men; Pliny mentions the possibility of admitting the sons of commoners to the city councils.

Granted local variations, it is generally admitted that it was in the first three quarters of the second century that the eastern provinces enjoyed the time of their greatest prosperity. The century opened under a philhellene

emperor, Trajan, but it was Hadrian who ended the war with Parthia and who showed his awareness of the importance of the provinces, not only by issuing a series of coins devoted to them, but also by his travels. Twice he toured the eastern provinces, offering the cities easy access to himself and the chance to put in petitions. It was Hadrian who resolved the long-standing and troublesome dispute caused at Aezani in Phrygia by the occupation of land belonging to the temple of Zeus by private squatters. His foundations in Mysia were of the traditional kind, offering the tribes of the district an opportunity of city life (Jones, 1971, 89). But the individuality of the man, and the scope it was allowed, shows in his most famous foundation, Antinoopolis in Egypt, on a site chosen for its proximity to the spot where his friend drowned in 130. That the memorial should take the form of a *polis*, one of the few in Egypt outside Alexandria, speaks loudly for the significance of the city in his mind. The settlers, 'New Hellenes', were Greeks from the other cities and veterans from the Egyptian legions, and the legal system of the city was modelled perhaps with self-conscious archaism, on that of the original Greek settlement at Naucratis. The intellectual Hadrian's special care was Athens, although he was able to help the whole of mainland Greece except Megara, and he acceded to the request of its citizens that he should draft a fresh law code modelled on those of Draco and Solon (Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, under AD 122); but besides indulging Athenian ruling circles in their nostalgia and their concern for privilege, Hadrian gave attention to practical matters. His oil law provided that olive-growers were to reserve one third of their produce for public purchase at market price, which may have been less than export price. Hadrian showed himself a traditionalist in another way when he founded a Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina, at Jerusalem (Jones, 1971, 277): like Gaius Gracchus at Carthage and Caesar at Corinth, he was replacing an enemy city that the Romans had destroyed with a Roman one. The new colony had a large territory and Jews were completely excluded from it; indeed it helped to provoke yet another Jewish uprising.

The material development of cities in which the emperor had no personal involvement illustrates the rising prosperity of Asia Minor and other areas during his reign and that of Antoninus Pius. It was under Hadrian that a new complex containing a colonnaded *agora* and *temenos* (sacred enclosure) of Zeus, with his magnificent new temple, was begun at Aezani, not only transforming the city but inspiring a whole school of masons there. Continuity of architectural development was assured by the conservatism of Greek architecture, on which Ward-Perkins insists (1974, 12–13): materials, architectural themes, and the use of established building types –

temple, theatre, council building, colonnade, and, from the fourth century onwards, gymnasium – all contributed, and matched the conservatism of social and political life. But there were novelties. It was under Hadrian that Perge in Pamphylia was able to convert its central avenue into the axial colonnaded street that is noted by Ward-Perkins as being, with the *nymphaeum* or tall fountain building, one of the characteristic developments of oriental architecture under the Empire; aqueducts too were an innovation of the first and second centuries as far as the east was concerned. At Perge the street, with a central water channel, runs toward the low acropolis from the south gate (the vistas are still impressive), and the gate was adorned with a triple arch. Such monumental constructions at the end of colonnaded streets, breaking the severity of the hellenistic plan, are characteristic of the first and second centuries AD. Perge's neighbour Attaleia was one of the earlier cities to embark on reconstruction, with the help of the Emperor Claudius; but it seems to have been anticipated by Sardis, where the colonnaded street is said to have been built c. 20-40. Some developments took many years: those at Gerasa, begun under Vespasian, were apparently not completed until the time of the Severi. Large-scale schemes of reconstruction and development could involve complex negotiations with the owners of buildings scheduled for demolition and rouse intense resentment and jealousy, as Dio of Prusa discovered when he embarked on the construction of a portico at Prusa some time before 101:

One might have supposed that the Propylaea at Athens were being tampered with, or the Parthenon ... instead of the disgraceful, ridiculous ruins.... There were some who were distressed to see the signs of their former poverty and ill-repute disappearing, who, far from being interested in the columns which were rising, or in the eaves of the roof, or in the shops under construction in a different quarter, were interested only in preventing you ever feeling superior than that crew (of men who bore you malice).

It required confidence to invest substantial amounts of capital in them, and substantial capital to invest.

It was fittingly in the reign of Hadrian's successor Antoninus Pius that Aelius Aristides delivered his Panegyric on Rome to an appreciative Roman audience. He was able to speak of the world as 'filled' with cities, some founded by Rome, others fostered by her; and of cities so clustered that a man could travel through two or three on the same day, as if passing

through sections of one and the same city. A more tangible and trustworthy index of prosperity in the east than Aristides' effusion is provided by the issues of local coinage, which provided change, supplemented the imperial coinage, and facilitated local and regional dealings. More important perhaps it was a sign of local autonomy and an opportunity for magnates to demonstrate generosity by supplying the requisite metal. In Asia Minor the number of authorities coining rose from 154 under the Julio-Claudians to 246 in the period from the Flavians to the Antonines (Broughton, in Frank, 1938–41, volume 4, 715 and 746). What for the cities was a glorious efflorescence was for Rome the satisfyingly smooth working of an administrative device. The cities did Rome's work for her, running country districts, so that the natives of villages were considered natives of the community to which the village was assigned; maintaining roads, at first local, eventually arterial, and servicing the imperial post; providing medical and educational facilities and above all collecting direct taxes.

When a governor was not available on a visit of inspection or on his judicial circuit he could be approached by envoys armed with letters. So in time of famine under Domitian the authorities of the colony of Antioch towards Pisidia approached the governor of Galatia for help, and he issued an edict ordering grain stocks to be declared and fixing the price to be charged for grain in the colony. The emperor too was frequently approached by embassies: diplomacy survived from the period of independence to a time when cities enjoyed only limited autonomy, and embassies to the emperor are named by Plutarch among the enterprises that still required fire and daring.

Theoretically the cities enjoyed various relations with the suzerain, according to their status. Some possessed treaties with Rome that went back to the time before Roman control over the east was known to be permanent. New treaties were still granted and Augustus even gave one to his creation of Nicopolis, but any treaty could be torn up if a city gave offence. Other communities were officially 'free', indeed whole areas could be so, as with the Lycian federation until 43. Greece had been declared free by T. Quinctius Flamininus in 196 BC after the defeat of Antiochus, and was so again in AD 67 by Nero. Freedom meant the absence of a provincial governor; it did not necessarily carry immunity from tribute, which was an additional special privilege. Without the protection of a treaty, freedom was even more vulnerable; the offence of the Lycians was the killing (murder or execution?) of Roman citizens. Cyzicus cost its freedom twice in the first century of the principate in 20 BC and again in AD 25.

These privileges, like lesser ones such as the right of giving asylum to fugitives or of housing a temple of the imperial cult, had to be pleaded for in the presence of emperor or senate. The patronage of influential Romans, or the favour of the imperial family, was of great importance for a city. The fact that Sparta was in the client ship of the Claudian family earned it special attention in the first hundred years of the principate; Ilium was lucky to find one of her Roman descendants to plead for a grant of immunity in the senate in AD 53: none other than the seventeen-year-old Nero.

For a lesser man to secure remission of tribute, the promise of a building from the emperor, or permission to add to the number of city councillors, as Dio of Prusa did for his city, was a coup that added greatly to his prestige and much easier to bring off if he enjoyed the favour of the emperor or even of the governor. Many of the links that bound cities to the ruling class of Rome were of this personal nature, but the Romans also had a consistent policy, put into practice after the struggle with the Achaeans in 146 BC, of maintaining the supremacy of the wealthy upper classes in the cities. These men were the natural allies of the Roman oligarchy, and it was easier to deal with few than with a changing many. In return for helping to maintain order, 'guarding the cities' in Aristides' words, and for superintending the performance of Rome's work, the wealthy classes were protected and kept in power; in Bithynia Pompey had arranged for membership of city councils to be permanent and to depend on adlection by an official, equivalent to the Roman censor. It was alien to Greek practice, led to the development of an hereditary curial class, and to class antagonism within the cities. The apathetic populace of Nicomedia watched private houses and two public buildings being destroyed by fire, since the governor was forbidden by Trajan to raise a fire brigade of 150 men for fear of it turning into a political organization, easy to supervise though they would have been. In times of famine, which were not infrequent in Mediterranean lands and which for inland cities like Antioch towards Pisidia could not be remedied by imports from the sea, the people roused themselves and could attack their rulers; that was what happened in Aspendus in Pamphylia under Tiberius when there was nothing on sale in the market but vetch and the rich were hoarding the grain. When Antioch on the Orontes was betrayed to the Persians in AD 253 by a city councillor, who was also leader of the lower classes in the city, decent people fled, but the masses remained behind under Persian rule.

The antagonism may be seen in terms of town and country as well as of rich and poor. In the territories for which they were responsible the cities

offered amenities and prestige for those who lived in them; outside the walls it was very much a question of subsistence. It was not that land was taxed by the city, but that income derived from the land was spent in or on it. How important manufacture, commerce, and shipping were as means of amassing wealth in the ancient world is a matter of controversy (see most recently Pleket, 1983). The information provided by ancient authors and the epigraphic record is incidental and sporadic: they were not a subject for polite letters and in relatively few cities did the inhabitants make a practice of recording their occupations on the monuments. Hopkins (1978, 72) notes the insignificant city of Corycus on the coast of Cilicia as an exception, counting 100 different trades there. Manufacture was closely linked to the produce of the soil; the carpets of Hierapolis came from the backs of the sheep that abounded in Phrygia, as did the woollen garments of Laodiceia. The activities offered by Dio of Prusa as 'respectable' alternatives to linen-working at Tarsus were those of dyer, cobbler, and carpenter (34, 23).

The basic producers, even when they were free citizen peasants and not officially treated as a separate class in society or even as aliens, like the Tarsus linen-workers, belonged to what came to be officially recognized as the humbler classes; even if they were permitted to take part in the limited political life of the assemblies to the extent of having a vote in them, they were debarred by law from membership of the city councils and tenure of magistracies.

It was the city, and the wealth, culture, and political expertise it conferred, that took easterners into the Roman senate in increasing numbers. Not surprisingly, they came in the greatest strength from the cities of western Asia Minor: nearly a third of the total from the Greek east. When they entered the House they did not necessarily turn their backs on their native cities; the consular Cassius Dio eventually retired to his Bithynian estates. Local patriotism played an even larger part in the lives of men who had not embarked on imperial service, while for the poorer city-dwellers it provided an escape from their insignificance as individuals. It did not preclude resentment against the upper class and their Roman protectors, rather the reverse. Cities cultivated a long historical memory, going back to a time when many were still real democracies and when what really mattered was relations with the city on the other side of the mountains. It was natural that ancient cities like Athens and Megara should retain these feelings, so violently indeed, that it seemed to one travelling sophist, as if Athens had only just passed the decree against Megara that opened the Peloponnesian War, a decree that was half a millennium old in his time (Philostratus, *hives of the Sophists*, 529). Newer cities such as

Nicaea, founded at the end of the fourth century BC, but cultivating fantasies of an earlier and more distinguished origin, were proud too, the more so when confronted by upstarts like mid-third century Nicomedia. The rivalry between these two cities, for which they were chided by Dio at the beginning of the second century, was still alive in the middle of the fifth. Augustus had allowed the site of the provincial temple to Rome and himself to be placed at Nicomedia, Nicaea being allowed only the second prize of a shrine to Caesar, who was dead and so less helpful. There was an attempt to deal fairly in the matter of titles: Nicomedia was the metropolis, Nicaea 'first city' of the province. But Domitian also permitted Nicomedia the title 'first'. Not content with that, the Nicomedians tried at first unsuccessfully to deprive Nicaea of its title, until, in 193–4, Nicaea supported the losing claimant to the throne, Pescennius Niger, against Septimius Severus, in part because of its very rivalry with Nicomedia. Then the words 'first city' were systematically hammered out of the monumental inscriptions that bore them. Even later at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 Nicomedia and Nicaea were still at loggerheads, although the rights they were claiming had undergone a metamorphosis; Nicaea was challenging Nicomedia's sole right as a metropolis to consecrate bishops.

The disadvantages of conflict, repeatedly pointed out by sophists and philosophers, were real; energy was wasted on slanging-matches, money on embassies to governor and emperor. Vespasian limited to three the number of envoys that a city might send him. There was the cost of real fighting in time of civil war and Herodian's narrative reveals that it was not only Nicaea and Nicomedia that were involved in the struggle of 193–4, but also Tyre and Berytus, Laodiceia and Antioch in Syria. Then there was the ease with which unscrupulous governors were able to play off one side against the other for their own purposes, as Dio of Prusa warned the people of Nicomedia. The emperor too might be drawn in, together with his favourites.

But the effects of inter-city rivalry were by no means all deleterious. The cities could not normally fight, so they tried to outdo each other, not only in mere titles, but in magnificence and amenity, to the advantage of their inhabitants, often to the lowest as well as the highest. Nor did the money go only on buildings, statuary, and tips. Cultural life flourished, especially in the form of the oratory of the Second Sophistic; music filled the *odeia* that many cities possessed as well as their theatres, while athletics survived the increasing, and much deplored, taste for the gladiatorial games and wild-beast shows that formed part of the imperial cult. Moreover, athletics and literary culture, though essentially city-based and inculcated in all youths

under training (*ephebes*) by masters and professors supervised by the city *gymnasiarch*, were forces for unity. Men competed as individuals, though their city of origin was what identified them, and athletes and professional musicians were members of officially recognized international guilds. Sophists, as we have seen, were among the strongest advocates of harmony; even at Megara the visiting sophist Marcus was able to persuade the assembly to let the Athenians participate in the Lesser Pythian Games. The *Homonoia* (Concord) which they advocated was sometimes attained and celebrated on the coinage. A formal treaty was not implied, and the basis might be political, cultural, or economic co-operation between the elites of the cities involved; distinguished men might become citizens of more than one city, and ties were formed by intermarriage.

Another unifying and mediating factor was the provincial assemblies that existed in one form or another throughout the east, sometimes with more than one to a province, as in Bithynia-Pontus (cf. Millar, 1977, 385 ff.). The Lycian Assembly was well-established and had a serious function, that of guiding the federation of cities that made up the League. Other associations, like that of 'The Greeks in Asia' had less clear-cut functions but were used to dealing with governors and senate. Under the principate these organizations, and others that developed, found a new and most important role in maintaining good relations with the emperor and his family through homage offered to him and to the goddess Roma. They could also organize joint prosecutions of offending governors, relieving individual members of a high proportion of the heavy cost, and mediate between members in dispute. An inscription from Cierium in Thessaly reveals that the governor of Moesia, some time before 35, referred a boundary dispute between Cierium and Metropolis to the Thessalian Assembly; at least 334 votes were cast, revealing that some members, presumably the larger cities as in the Lycian League, had more than one vote.

In sustaining their own position within the city, and their city's within the Assembly, local notables incurred heavy expenditure; they had to satisfy their fellow citizens by providing amenities such as oil for the *gymnasium* and even durable gifts like buildings, or impress the governor and perhaps the emperor, and so outdo their rivals. It was only while the upper classes could maintain themselves in comfort while continuing to meet the cost of office that the system could continue to work satisfactorily for those associated with it. In the course of the second century danger signs began to appear. First, Roman concern for the mismanagement of city finances, which was no new thing in Greek cities, but aggravated because one class

was permanently in power and had to pay for the privilege. From Domitian's reign onwards the emperors began to send curators (the Greek word used means 'accountants') to the cities not as permanent officials but from time to time (cf. Burton, 1979). Then came a new office within the cities, that of the 'Twenty (or Ten) leading men', who were responsible for the production of tax dues. There must always have been individuals who preferred to keep their funds intact. But the number and universality of the measures, that began to be taken to enforce the performance of civic duties (*liturgies*) and the holding of civil office, together with, by Ulpian's time, the enforced return of runaway councillors to the cities to which they belonged (*Digest* 50, 2, 1), show the trend, as do the inscriptions that begin to treat the voluntary holding of office as a merit not a privilege.

The change coincides, as it should, with the beginnings of economic difficulty. In the second half of the second century the defence of the empire became less sure; a Scythian tribe penetrated deep into mainland Greece and was fought off by local levies. The security of the countryside within was requiring more attention and the cities were appointing officials called Irenarchs and Paraphylaces, who had bodies of mounted policemen, *Diogmitae* ('pursuers'), under their command. In the civil wars which opened the reign of Septimius Severus and which were conducted over a large area of the east, the cities suffered, and some were afterwards punished, although others benefited from the claims they had established on the emperor's generosity.

Severus' efforts at restoration and defence, including the settlement of veterans in Mesopotamia and the grant of colonial status to Tyre and other cities (Jones, 1971, 220–1), could not stem the difficulties that beset them in the third century. The invasions of Greece and Asia Minor must have ruined crops that demanded long cultivation, and the war and the secession of provinces would have disrupted trade. Above all, the burden of taxation required to support the armies became ever more crushing. The steep decline in the number of inscriptions commemorating individuals and the benefits they had conferred vividly illustrates the decline in prosperity.

But decline was uneven, as progress had been. C. Roueché has suggested that it was because of the relative advance of Caria and Phrygia that the province of Asia was partitioned in the middle of the century (1981, 103 ff.); only under separate governors would the districts involved have received the attention they demanded. The Upper Tembris valley in Phrygia abounds in documents that refer to its rural activities and produce. Yet towns were few in this area, which was partly given over to imperial estates. The inhabitants had a strong agricultural economy with little costly

superstructure to support. Besides, they were away from the main routes through the peninsula and escaped the burden of supporting the armies on their way to and from the eastern frontier.

The emperors did not waver in their commitment to urbanization, and even in the fourth century were conferring city status on the deserving communities of central Asia Minor in exemplary terms; but besides these stretches of country that were only lightly touched by city life, there were whole provinces that resisted or were thought unsuitable for it. More ruthlessly and less efficiently than their predecessors the Ptolemies, the Romans exploited the natives of Egypt, over concern for the corn supply and out of inertia. Alexandria was not allowed the council of a Greek *polis* until Septimius Severus granted it; then the old *metropoleis* were also granted councils, selected from the élite members of the *gymnasia* who were to appoint city magistrates and most *nome* officials; the cities became responsible for the administration of the nomes, but the concession to Greek sentiment did not succeed in galvanizing the administration into further efforts.

In Judaea the Seleucids had met resistance to hellenization and there was hostility to towns on the part of country folk; Jesus had no time for them and Tiberias was an object of hatred at the time of its foundation by Herod Antipas. Gradually Judaea was broken up between city territories, but they were alien foundations imposed on its intractable population.

Outside the heartland of hellenization in Greece and Asia Minor lay cultures which the peace imposed by Rome allowed to burgeon into productive hybrids. Besides the developments in philosophy at Alexandria that culminated in Plotinus, there was the school of Roman law that flourished in Berytus and the development in Tiberias of the authoritative version of the Mishnah under Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi. The caravan cities of Petra, Bostra, and Palmyra on the edge of the Empire had different functions and interests from those of normal Greek cities, although they possessed some of their amenities, such as theatres. Their language was Aramaic; Palmyra's irregular city plan, the dress, nomenclature, housing, cults, and funerary monuments of its inhabitants were all alien. The direction taken by western influences can be seen in the words borrowed from Greek and Latin; twenty-five of the fifty Greek words are concerned with political life, ten with art and architecture.

But it is Ward-Perkins' description of Dura-Europus (1974, 20–1) that gives a dynamic picture of the rise and fall of the tide of Greek city life in the far east. A Seleucid foundation of about 300 BC, it had a space reserved for the *agora* at the centre of the Hippodamian plan, but although the walls

and fortress were well maintained by all its occupiers, Seleucid, Parthian, and Roman, the projected public buildings were never completed; the city centre occupied only half the area allotted to it:

The temples of the last three centuries were all traditionally Eastern buildings dedicated to oriental divinities, including for good measure a synagogue and a church, and by AD 250 the monumental buildings of the agora had been engulfed by the warren-like structures of an oriental bazaar.

In the heartlands of hellenization the late Empire saw an evening up in the distribution of cities (Jones, 1940, 89 ff.). In Thrace and Bithynia-Pontus, where the few had been made responsible for the administration of large tracts of country, new cities emerged; urbanized Greece, Macedonia, and Galatia suffered a severe decline in the number of cities, while in areas remote from invasion, like Lycia and Cilicia, the number remained stable. In the well-urbanized areas smaller cities could not maintain their councils, or guarantee imperial revenue; elsewhere what cities there were found it difficult to manage the districts for which they were responsible. It was superior resources, combined with a long urban tradition, that protected western Asia Minor from entering the Byzantine age with a net loss of no more than one-fifth on the Augustan tally of cities.

• URBANIZATION • IN • ITALY • • AND • THE • WESTERN • • EMPIRE •

J. F. Drinkwater

The cities of the Roman west varied greatly in their origins, importance and material splendour. Nevertheless, they manifested a consistent family likeness, both in their layout and in the amenities which they provided (Berchem, 1977, 25). They represented an aggressively homogeneous culture which stretched from Scotland to the Sahara. The very incongruity of the remains of certain Roman cities, in surroundings which today seem utterly alien to them, serves as a dramatic reminder of the penetration of Graeco-Roman civilization into the lands around the western Mediterranean and occasionally finds an echo in the east (p. 332) ([pl. 13.1](#)).

The characteristic features of the western Roman city, alike with many in the east, comprised, first of all, a geometric, chequer-board street-grid ([fig. 13.1](#)). Within the blocks of land (*insulae*) thus formed were expensive and extensive complexes of public buildings and monuments. Chief amongst them were those which were used for administration – the law-court (*basilica*) which was also available as a general assembly-hall, and the local senate-house (*curia*). These were grouped around the *forum*, an open paved or gravelled space, bounded by porticoes as protection against rain or excessive heat ([fig. 13.2](#)). Frequently associated with the forum-complex was a temple, the focus of civic religious activity, in and around which were worshipped either Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, the ‘Capitoline Triad’ of Republican Rome, the reigning emperor, his family and imperial ancestors

(the ‘Imperial Cult’; [Part 10](#)), or some major indigenous deity in Graeco-Roman form ([pl. 13.2](#)). Other temples, for other deities, were scattered through the city, which was regarded by its inhabitants as a community of the divine, the living and the dead. The last were found in cemeteries which lined the main roads leading from the city. Their remains were interred beyond the sacred boundary (*pomerium*) of the settlement of the living, but the prominence of their tombs, often richly sculptured and inscribed, must have constantly brought them to the minds of

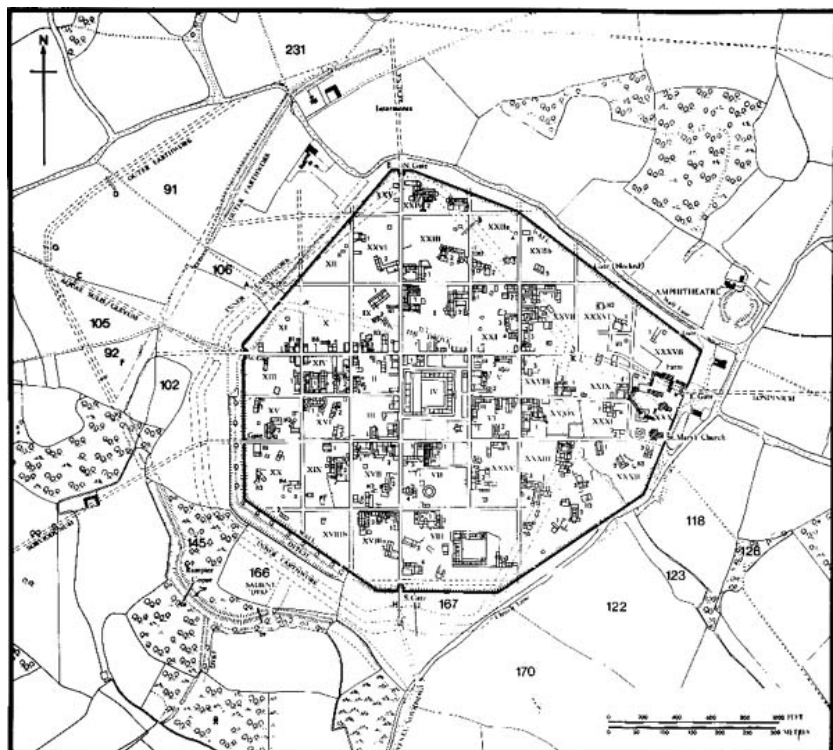


Figure 13.1 Plan of Silchester, Britain (*revised Fulford, 1984*)

their successors ([pl. 13.3](#); [Part 9, Chapter 29](#)). Elsewhere within the *pomerium* were those lavishly equipped leisure-centres of the Graeco-Roman world, the bath-buildings, of which every self-respecting western Roman community would have had at least one, and usually several ([figs 13.3](#) and [13.19](#)). There were also additional centres of amusement and resort in the shape of theatres for drama, mime and perhaps even music-hall turns (Février *et al.*, 1980, 294), amphitheatres for blood-sports and combat

and circuses for chariot-racing (pl. 13.4). A number of streets and public buildings were adorned with fountains and, of course, the baths too made direct use of great quantities of water.

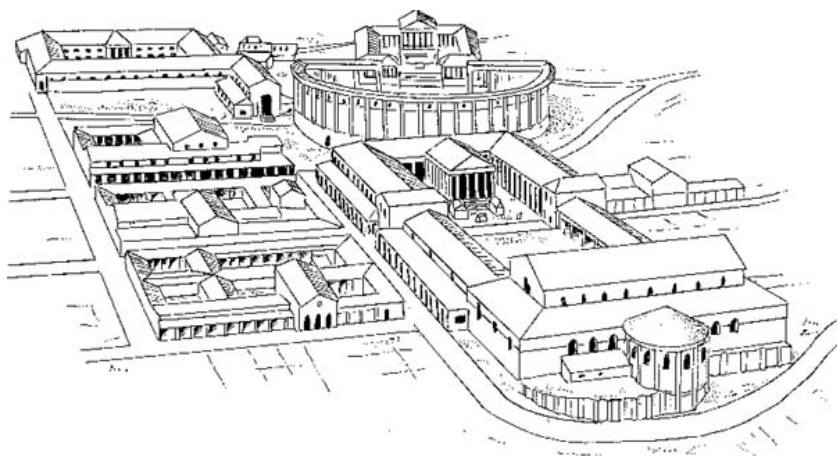


Figure 13.2 Reconstruction of the forum complex, Augst, Switzerland. Note the basilica and its attached curia in the foreground – the seat of the self-perpetuating local aristocratic oligarchy (after Boethius and Ward-Perkins)

The supply and disposal of this water required the construction of elaborate systems of leats, conduits, siphons, arcaded aqueducts, settling-basins, and mains, together with equally efficient networks of drains and sewers, which also made feasible the provision of large public latrines (pls 13.5 and 13.6). However, it should be stressed that, despite such facilities, much water for domestic use continued to be drawn from private wells and cisterns. The main streets were often graced by porticoes, monumental gateways and triumphal arches (pl. 13.7). Private building was at its grandest in the homes of the well-to-do, decorated with mosaics and frescoes, and built around one or more internal courtyard-gardens (fig. 13.4). The dwellings of ordinary people were much smaller and more simple – often just a range of rooms running back from the street, with business-premises at the front and workshop-facilities in a back-yard (fig. 13.5). However, the enterprising rich were not averse to letting the ground-floor fronts of their town properties as commercial and manufacturing premises (fig. 13.6). Taverns and brothels were popular businesses. More respectable professional and commercial activities, for example associated with the law, and banking, were usually accommodated within the forum-complex, and traders could sometimes find additional public space in secondary forums, or market-

halls (*macella*) (fig. 13.7). Noisome or dangerous activities, such as tanning and the firing of pottery, were often confined to the fringes of the city. Most private building was single- or double-storied; high-rise accommodation, such as is heard of in Rome, and is still dramatically on view at Ostia, was very much

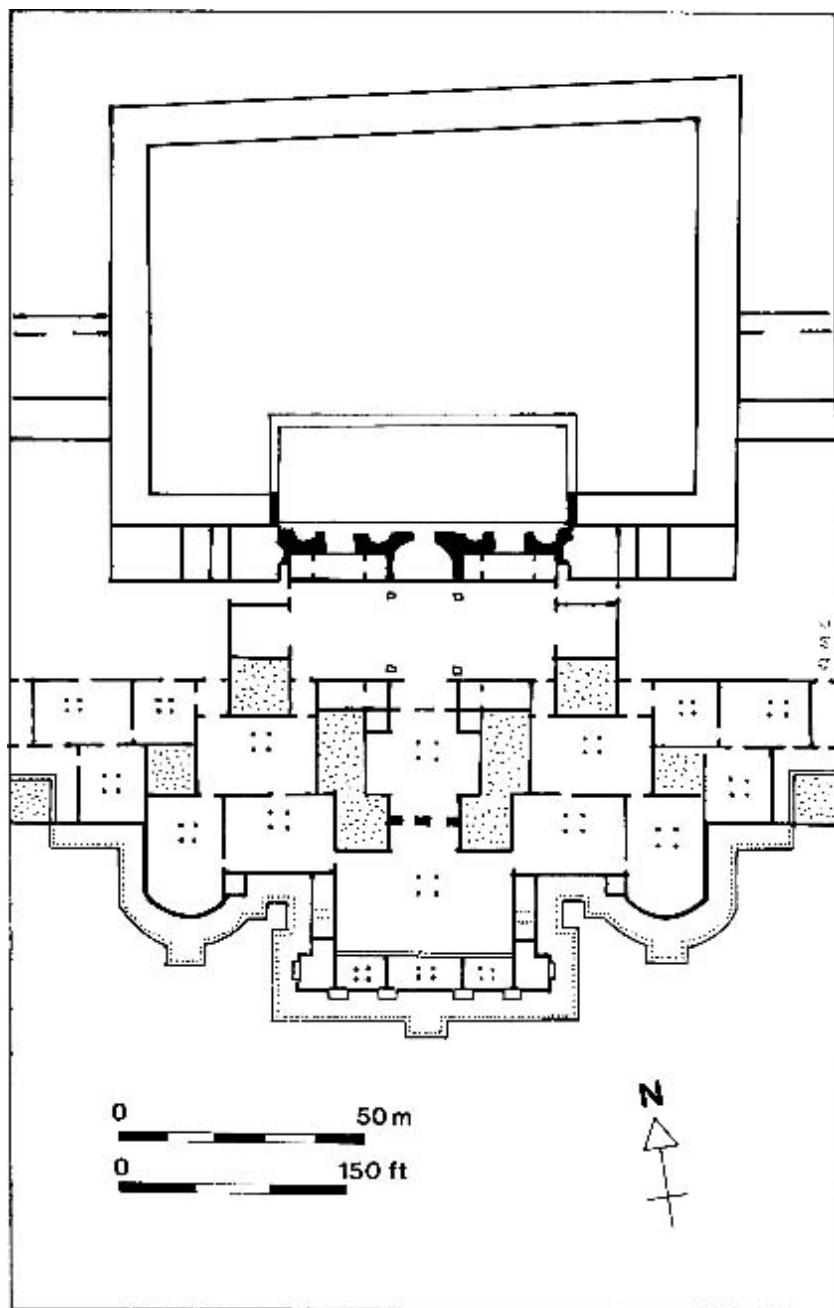


Figure 13.3 Plan of the 'Barbarathermen', Trier, Germany. The baths of this major provincial city, though simpler in design and decoration, are very similar in size to the Baths of Caracalla (*after Février*)

a metropolitan phenomenon, seldom to be found in provincial cities (fig. 13.8).

The fact that it is possible to describe the physical characteristics of the cities of the Roman west virtually according to a checklist should not induce us to suppose that they were mindlessly mass-produced according to some uniform specification. Historical, economic and political forces combined to make all settlements different in status and aspect. Rome, 'The City' par excellence, was herself unique – an immense sprawl of streets and buildings which it was impossible to recast into a more orderly shape. She outstripped every other urban centre, west and east, in the number of her inhabitants and the splendour of her public buildings. Within the Italian peninsula there were other cities whose development was also long and eventful, as exemplified in the palimpsest which was Pompeii (fig. 13.9). Beyond Italy, a city's place in the imperial hierarchy played an important part in its growth. In terms of size and magnificence it would have been impossible to have confused Silchester (fig. 13.1), the small national capital of the

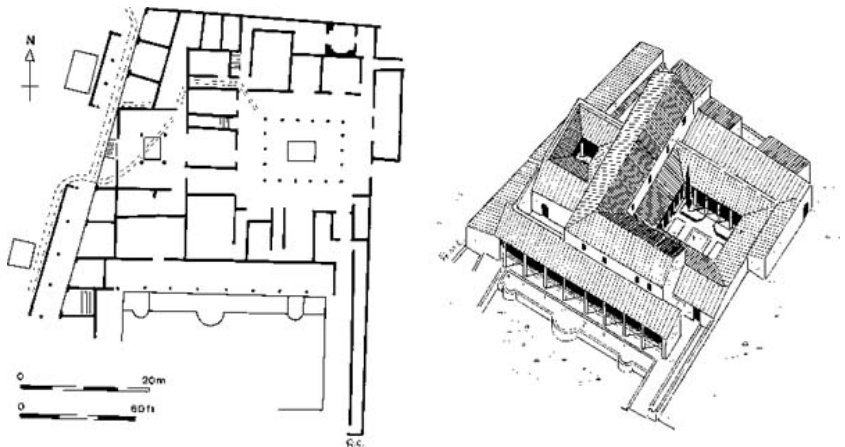


Figure 13.4 Plan and reconstruction of a peristyle-type house ('Maison au Dauphin') at Vaison, France (after Février)

British Atrebrates, with Carthage, seat of the proconsular governor of the province of Africa. Even cities of very similar ranking would have been easy to tell apart thanks to the continued exploitation of vernacular styles of building and materials. The underlying archaeological repertoire was solidly Graeco-Roman, but this did not prevent the occurrence of distinct regional variations, as exemplified in the forum-complex, with Italianate

African, enclosed Gallic and military British designs (figs 13.10, 13.11 and 13.12).

However, Roman technological and administrative skills permitted the surveying and development of city-sites on a much grander scale than had earlier been practised in the west. Despite individual differences it is clear that there was a strong conception of an ideal form which went to make most western cities look generally similar. The most striking manifestation of this was the striving after an orthogonal street-system.

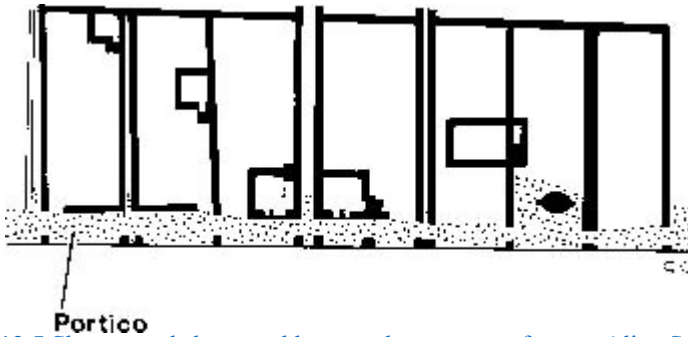


Figure 13.5 Shops, workshops and houses along a street front at Alise-Ste-Reine, France. Scale 1:100 (*after Février*)

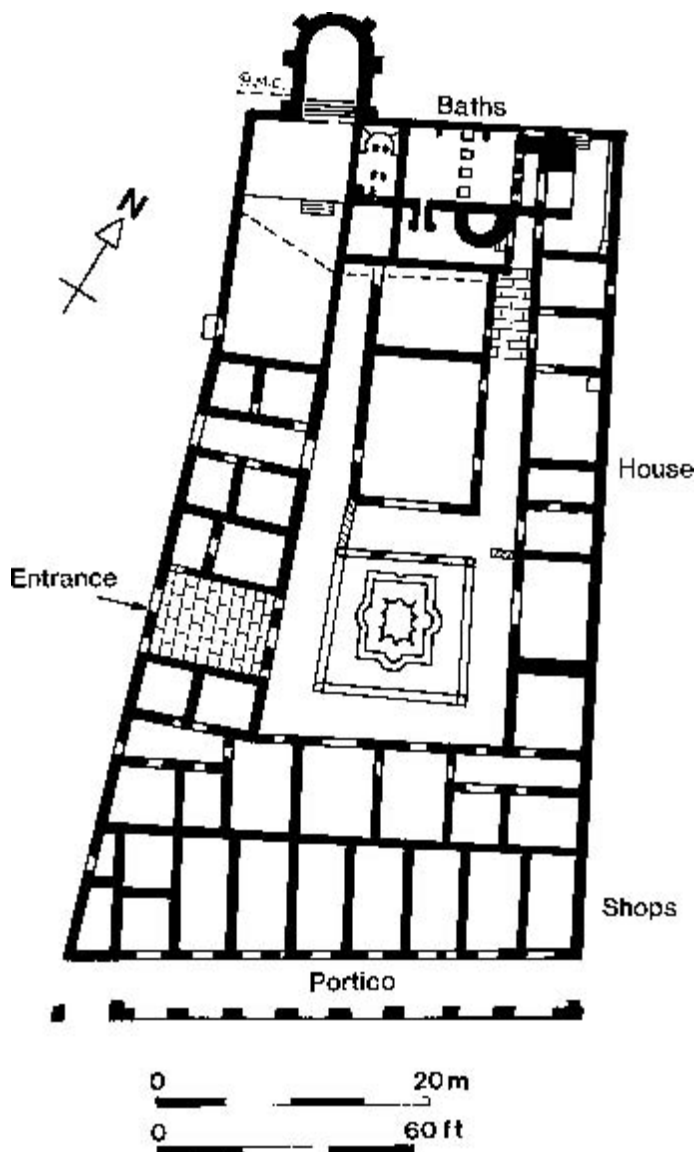


Figure 13.6 Large house fronted by shops at Volubilis, Morocco (after *Claveland Lévêque*)

Wherever possible priority was given to creating a street-plan which was impeccably correct in two dimensions, what has been usefully termed ‘perfect horizontality’ (Février *et al.*, 1980, 266–7), through the levelling of ridges, the filling of hollows and the terracing of hillsides (pl. 13.8). However, such ambitions required virgin sites and suitable topographies to

keep costs within reasonable bounds. These advantages rarely occurred

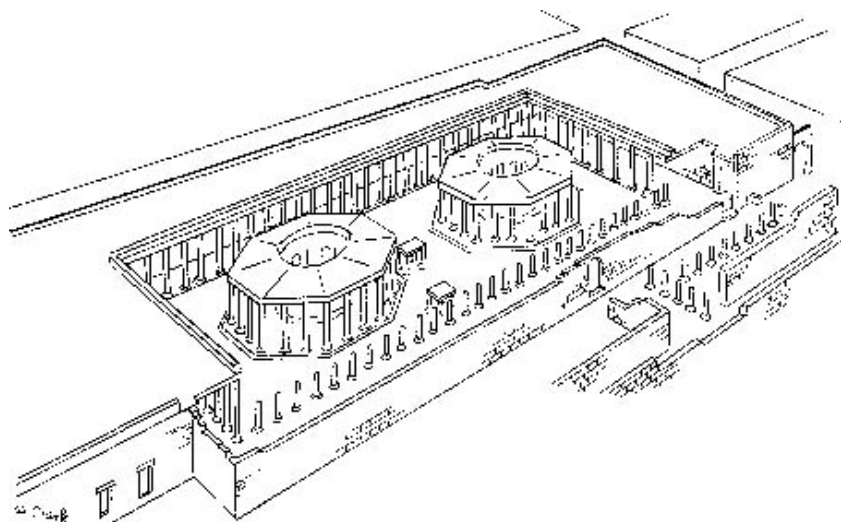


Figure 13.7 Reconstruction of the market-hall at Lepcis Magna (*after Picard*)

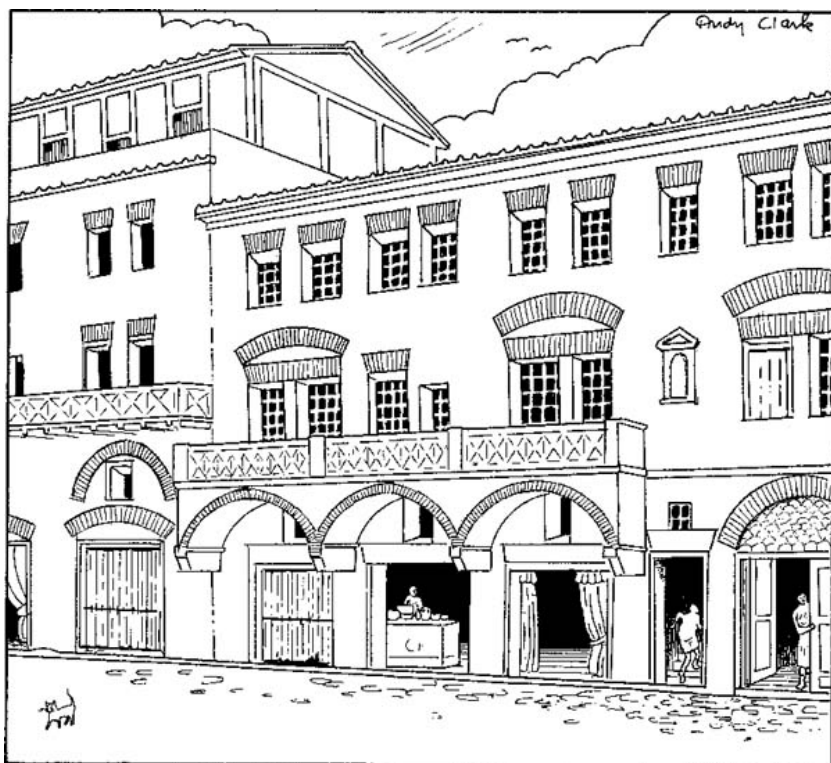


Figure 13.8 Apartment building with cookhouse on the ground floor at Ostia, Italy
(after Boethius and Ward-Perkins)

together, so the numbing regularity of the classic gridiron is a rarity, even in many colonial settlements. Relatively few western cities were, in the end, able to display perfect horizontality, but fewer still had the courage to dispense with the ideal altogether. Most settled for a compromise, and it is this which, perhaps most of all, gives them their family likeness.

It should not be forgotten though that the fabric of the Roman city was but an expression of the cultural values of those who caused it to be built. The ubiquitous similarity of the cities of the western Empire was the mark of a strong and self-assured imperial power, ready to impose its own ideas on others. It also reflects the willingness of western peoples to co-operate in the process of their own romanization. Rome considered

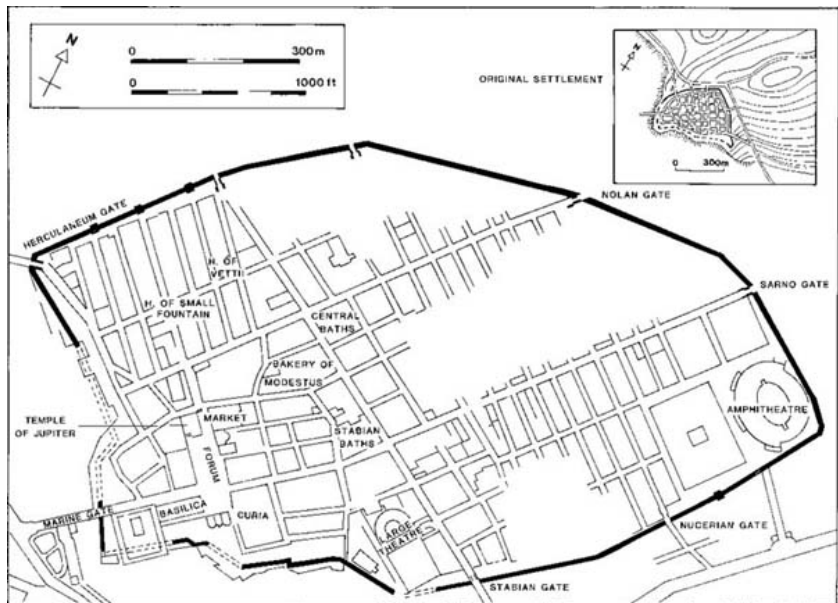


Figure 13.9 Pompeii, Italy: the city's Italic, Greek and Roman roots are reflected in the development of its street-plan which grows outwards from the original settlement in the south-west corner (*after Grant*)

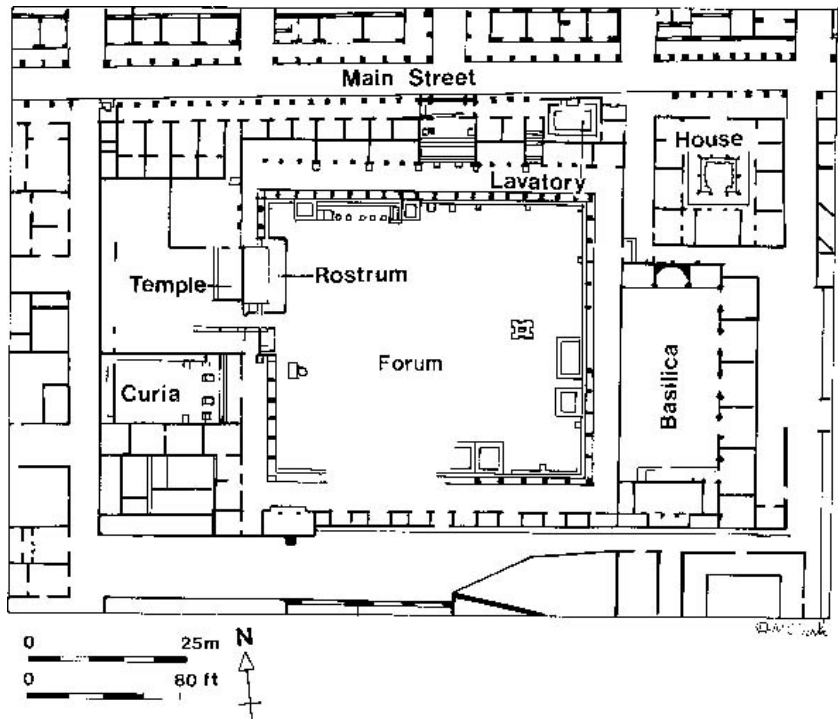


Figure 13.10 Forum complex of Timgad, Algeria: the curia, basilica and temple are independent elements (after Boethius and Ward-Perkins)

cities to be essential for the existence of her Empire, and its well-being. She borrowed and developed Greek ideas on the theory of urbanization, as is seen in Vitruvius' *De architectura* of the late first century BC, and, in practice, her ruling elite encouraged as a matter of course the creation of cities in those parts of her Empire which they considered to be backward in this respect as is seen in the activity of Agricola, governor of Britain, in AD 79 (Tacitus, *Agricola* 21) (fig. 13.13). Such an attitude was derived from an historical experience common to many cultures around the eastern and central Mediterranean, where discrete riverine and coastal sites had encouraged the growth of permanent human communities to no more than city-state size, thus generating the importance of the central city. Rome herself was the product of this process, and, as her power and awareness grew, her traditional respect for the city-community was particularly reinforced by her absorption of the ideal of the classical Greek *polis*, and the common popular and educated opinion that this was the only acceptable location for civilized human activity (p. 43 above). Indeed, the extent of a people's progress towards the establishment of a city-state became Rome's

standard measure for its level of development. Thus when Rome sought to pacify the west by persuading it to enjoy the fruits of her civilization she first sought to establish city-states there. The concrete indication of the promotion and success of this policy was the founding and embellishment

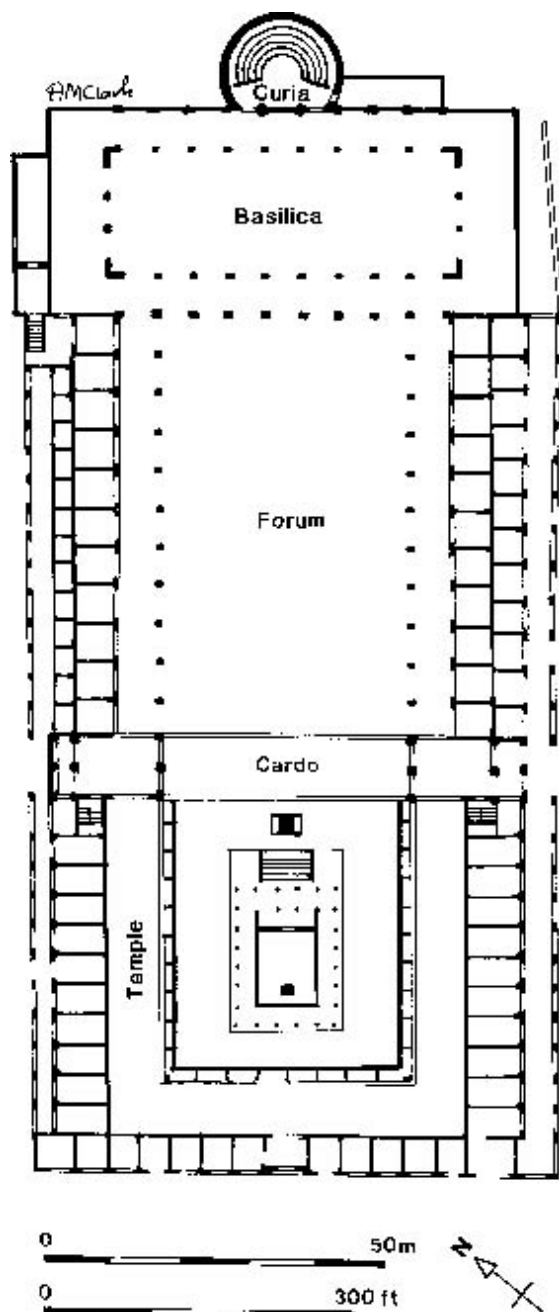


Figure 13.11 Forum complex of Augst, Switzerland: curia, basilica and temple have been brought into the same orientation (*after Duval*)

of the central cities in prescribed Graeco-Roman fashion. An acceptable

city was hard proof of the existence of an acceptable city-state: 'The aesthetic-architectural definition was shorthand for a political and social definition' (Finley, 1973, 124). However, this is not the whole of the story because there were other motives involved in Rome's encouragement of the western cities. Above all, even when the central government of the empire was increasingly revealing itself as an autocratic monarchy, the city-state was seen as the natural unit of administration (Ward-Perkins, 1974, 29). Indeed, the Romans continued to view their possessions as an aggregate of autonomous city-states under the hegemony of the supreme city-state, which was Rome. This attitude enabled them to delegate most of the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of provincial affairs, including even the collection of imperial taxes, to the multiplicity of self-perpetuating oligarchic regimes which ran the city-states of the empire. They were, therefore, able to avoid the expense of a professional imperial civil service. Urbanization

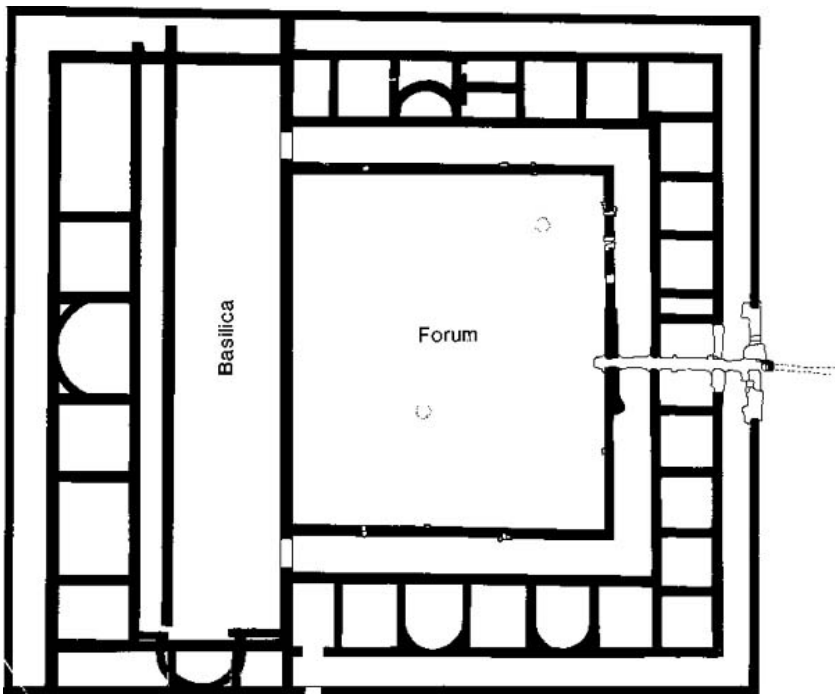


Figure 13.12 Forum complex of Silchester, Britain: the temple has disappeared and the whole resembles a legionary headquarters. Scale 1:800 (*after Fulford*)

was generally the post-military arm of Roman conquest, and especially so

in the west, where client-kingdoms tended to be rather thin on the ground (p. 391).

The cares of local office were not, however, foisted on unwilling provincial notables. On the contrary, traditional aristocratic rivalry fused with Graeco-Roman ideals of public service to produce local leaders eager to become senators (*decuriones*, *curiales*) and magistrates. As in the east (p. 338) they sought these positions to advertise, confirm and increase their local standing, and to demonstrate the degree of their *romanitas*, the extent to which they conformed to the conventions of Graeco-Roman civilization. Aristocratic ambition (*aemulatio*) was also directed towards improving the legal status of the western communities within the formal hierarchy of the Empire, from simply 'foreign' to 'Latin' or even to the heights of honorary 'municipal' or 'colonial' rank, which gradually removed their juridical disabilities and eventually, through the associated acquisition of Roman citizenship, put them on an equal footing with Rome and her original settlement colonies. For their aristocratic rulers the ultimate prizes in this competition could be considerable – above all, the opportunity to proceed to win equestrian and senatorial office. A high level of architectural development of its central city greatly increased a community's chance of promotion. It was thus as part of this highly competitive process that the western cities were adorned, occasionally as a result of imperial generosity, but far more often at the private expense of their wealthy rulers, with their basilicas, temples, baths, aqueducts, libraries and the like.

Rome, therefore, played an undeniably significant role in the urbanization of the lands around the western Mediterranean. But it should not be supposed that western urbanization would not have taken place without her. On the contrary, in the last few centuries before Christ there was a spontaneous crystallization of urban life along the western Mediterranean littoral, and deep within its hinterland. Here, agriculture was moving beyond the level of bare subsistence. A food surplus both encouraged and required the evolution of more complex social systems which supported an increasing number of specialists – political, military, religious, educational, commercial and

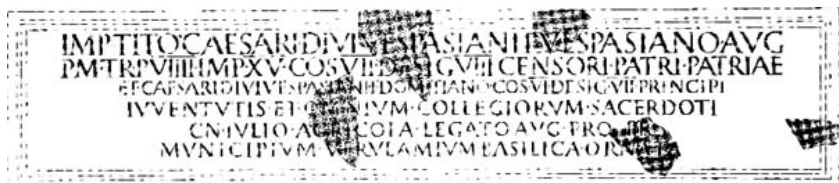


Figure 13.13 Conjectural reconstruction of the forum inscription from Verulamium,

industrial – who did not themselves work the land. The natural base for such people and their dependants, the best place for them to protect, display and increase their position and status, was the town (cf. Sjöberg, 1960, 65). The stimulus to urbanize might well be external, such as the fear or admiration of outsiders, prompting the establishment of towns as specific acts of political policy. However, the potential had to be there to begin with. The western Mediterranean had long witnessed productive interplay between stimulus and potential. Punic trading-settlements had been established in Spain and north Africa as early as c. 1000 BC; and within three centuries Greek colonies appeared along the coasts of southern Italy, Sicily, Gaul and Spain. The newcomers influenced the native peoples in their vicinity. In Italy there was a fertile exchange of urban ideas between Greeks and Etruscans, leading to important advances in the evolution of Italian town-planning, for example at Marzabotto (Ward-Perkins, 1974, 26). These were eventually taken up by Rome and her colonies. In southern Gaul, Greek influence on a vigorous local culture produced dramatic Gallo-Greek urbanization, including orthogonal street-planning, at sites such as Enserune, Entremont and Nages. South-eastern Spain, following both Greek and Punic examples, embarked on its own urban revolution, particularly in the region of Turdetania, around the valley of the Guadalquivir. As a result of Carthage's confrontation with Rome, direct Punic urbanization in Spain increased substantially in the third century BC culminating in the foundation of Cartagena, in 228. In Africa an extensive and close network of indigenous agglomerations had long been influenced by the Punic coastal cities, as may be seen in the early remains of Numidian Dougga (fig. 13.14). However, perhaps even more dramatic than this Mediterranean-centred urbanization was that which took place in western continental Europe. For example, a number of Celtic sites in the vicinity of the Drau (Magdalensburg), the Danube (Heuneburg; Manching), the Mosel (Titelberg) and the Rhône (Bibracte) have revealed the beginnings of proto-urbanization (by which is meant agglomerations with significant functions other than those to do with just agriculture and defence) well ahead of the arrival of Rome (figs 13.15, 13.16 and 13.17). This resulted from the interaction of considerable local economic development and Mediterranean influences: Greek, Punic, perhaps even Etruscan. When Rome arrived she did not recognize these indigenous developments as cities because, lacking overall planning and ostentatious public buildings, they did not conform to the aesthetic-architectural criteria

of the established Graeco-Roman model. However, such embryonic or proto-towns, though born of loosely-linked tribal communities quite different from the *polis*, with its closely defined and extremely self-aware citizen-body, eased the way for the introduction of the Roman version of the city-state. Rome rode the wave of western urbanization, she did not create it.

Rome in fact both quickened and distorted existing processes of indigenous urbanization. Once the initial turmoil of annexation was ended Roman rule brought peace and material prosperity. Imperial taxation was not excessive under the High Empire, and in and about the frontier areas, where troops and administrators tended to be concentrated, imperial expenditure served to stimulate provincial economies, already helped by the provision of better means of communication. Urban centres, old and new, could flourish along the highways and, above all, around military bases. As they stood, however, they had no specific place within the administrative framework of the Empire; they were still 'towns'. The *cities* resulted from Rome's early and uncompromising encouragement of the city-state. In some areas, such as southern Gaul and Africa, the new states were from the start, probably because of their longer historical development, established as relatively small units, which allowed many, though not all, of the emerging towns to continue as central cities. However, it is possible to argue that elsewhere, especially in central Gaul, the pressure to establish a single centre to serve each large national area diverted aristocratic interest from other existing sites of urban development. The consequent failure of the subsidiary towns (*vici*; see [Part 5](#), [Chapter 14](#)) to meet the standards expected of a western classical city, especially in the matter of orthogonal planning, has tempted too many scholars influenced by Graeco-Roman prejudices, to ignore them in their evaluation of the character of western Roman

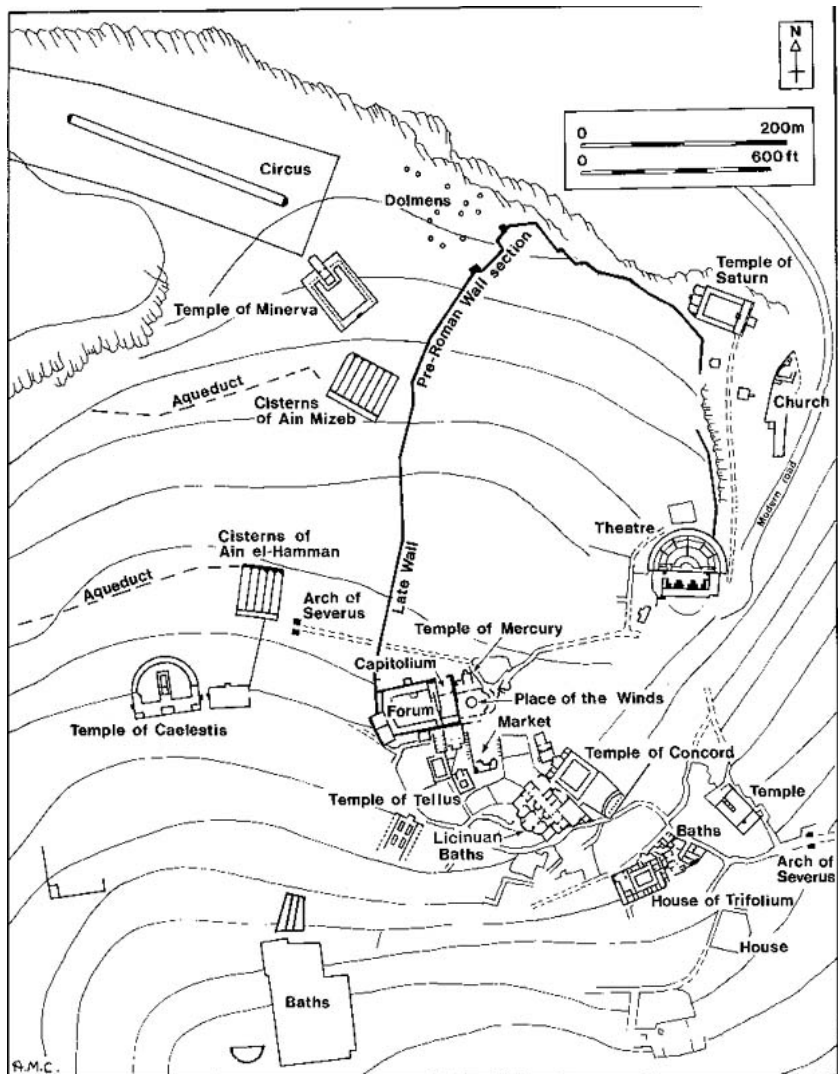


Figure 13.14 Dougga, Tunisia: 'an excellent example of the fusion of Libyan, Punic and Roman culture in North Africa' (after Finley)

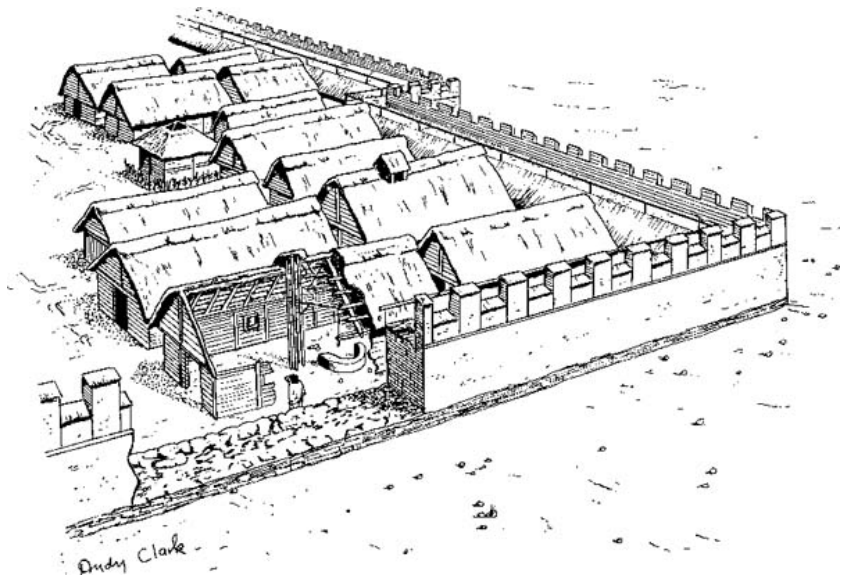


Figure 13.15 A reconstruction of the Heuneburg, Germany (after Bittel)

urbanization. The townships, despite their legal inferiority to the cities, continued and flourished under the High Empire, playing a significant role in the life of their communities (fig. 13.18).

The cities of the Roman west reached their monumental peak around the turn of the second and third centuries AD, following two hundred years or so of steady accumulation of the buildings and facilities appropriate to their standing. Such long-term acquisition was facilitated by the pigeon-hole nature of western orthogonal planning, which, though unsuitable for the designing of great architectural vistas, allowed communities to reserve sites for important building projects years in advance of actually beginning them. Conservative architectural traditions also minimized variation in style over long periods. A final factor in bringing the western cities to their perfection was the success and generosity of the Severan dynasty, as a result of which, for example, the imperial home-city of Lepcis Magna was splendidly rebuilt (pl. 13.9), while sea-borne trade brought prosperity to Bordeaux. In Britain, the civilian settlement which had grown up around the legionary base at York was accorded honorary colonial status. The same dynasty endowed Rome with the Baths of Caracalla (fig. 13.19).

The preceding stages are, however, difficult to describe, given the poor state of

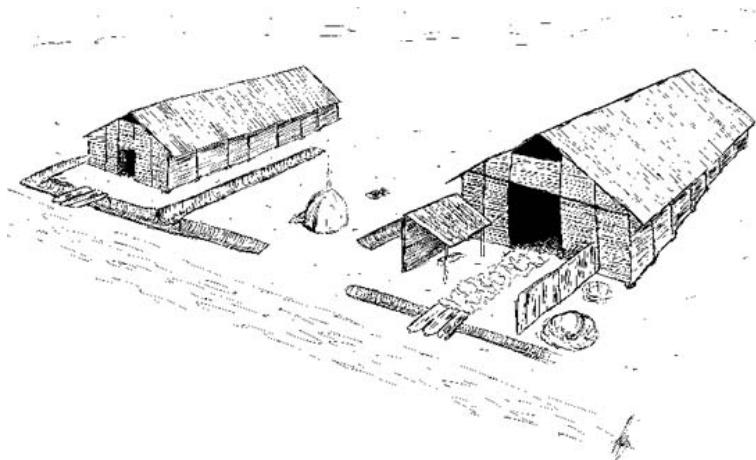


Figure 13.16 Reconstruction of wooden houses in ordered arrangement along a street at Titelberg, Luxembourg (after *Metzler and Weiller*)

our evidence. The process was clearly very uneven, both in time and space. Rome herself began to exchange Graeco-Etruscan for Greek building-styles around the early-second century BC. However, in common with other cities in the Italian peninsula, which had earlier been important in the introduction of Greek ideas, such as Naples, Capua and Pompeii, her congested site quickly became unsuitable for further large-scale innovation. Hence the forcing-bed of true Graeco-Roman urbanization was located, not in the capital, but in the plain of Lombardy, where numerous citizen-colonies had been founded to forestall insurrection on the part of the newly-conquered Celts of the region. Here, untrammelled by property-rights, and adopting a pronounced military look in response to the danger of armed attack, the gridiron city of the Roman west was born, and an architecture devised to suit its needs (Ward-Perkins, 1970, 5; 1974, 29) ([fig. 13.20](#)). But similar settlement around the rest of the western Mediterranean basin was at first rather slow. Spain led the way, with a fair amount of activity from the end of the Hannibalic war, but settlements consisted mainly of mixed foundations of Romans, Italians and natives, rather than full colonies. In Africa there was colonial settlement from the later-second century BC, but this was much less intensive than that in Spain, and again involved only irregular establishments. In southern Gaul there was only one full colony, at Narbonne, established around 118 BC. The great advance in colonization came with Caesar ([pl. 13.4](#)), and was sustained by Augustus. Both had to find land for veteran troops and the Italian poor, and to this end both undertook the intensive colonization

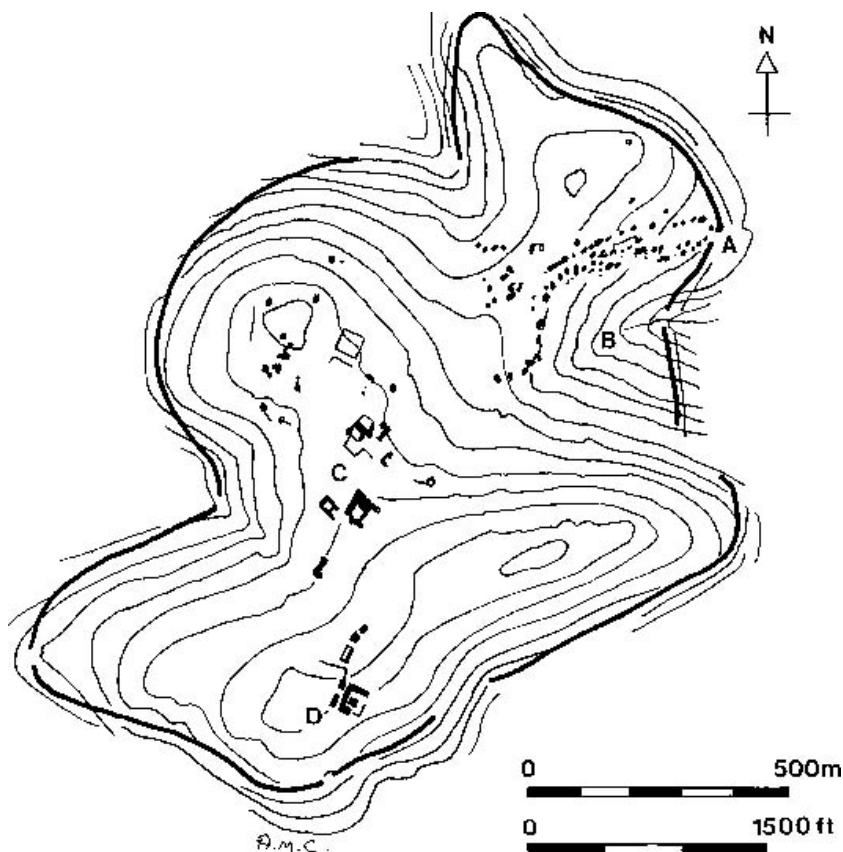


Figure 13.17 Mount Beuvray (Bibracte), France: (A) entrance; (B) artisan quarter; (C) aristocratic quarter; (D) sanctuary (after Février)

of Spain, southern Gaul and Africa (often on or by pre-existing native settlements). A further consideration may have been their perception of the need to create a Latin west to balance the eastern Greek half of the empire.

The role of these early settlement-colonies, both in Italy and overseas, should not be misunderstood. In the early years of the Empire there was clearly little thought of romanization through urbanization. The colonies were set up to fulfil precise military and political ends, and were individually sited to expropriate the richest lands of subject-peoples and to exploit these for the benefit of themselves and Rome. However, the settlers had to establish a *modus vivendi* with their neighbours. Rome had neither the manpower nor the technology to enable her to exterminate or permanently subject those whom she conquered. To survive, the colonists had to co-operate with the locals, and indeed, it is increasingly accepted that even the most formal colonies included from the start a proportion of

the original inhabitants of the places where they were founded (Clavel and Lévêque, 1971, 218–19). With co-operation came the spontaneous spreading of Graeco-Roman ideas which was accelerated by the arrival of Italian traders whose wares and, no doubt, critical comments on the places where they did business, would have served to alert the wealthy natives to the luxuries they were missing. As local

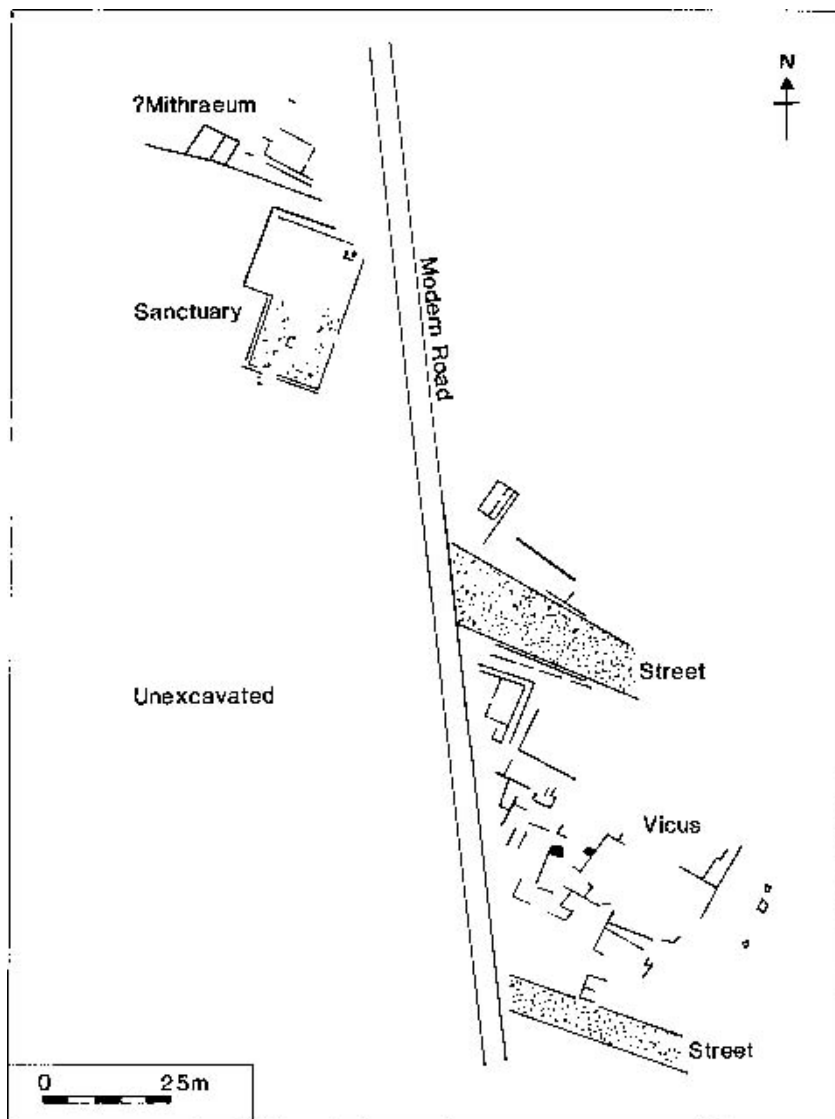


Figure 13.18 Plan of Les Bolards, Nuits St George, France. A Gallic township

which developed round a sanctuary complex. It remained occupied until the fifth century (after *Groupe Recherche Archéologique de Nuits*)

aristocratic rivalry began to work, and native communities, employing their own resources, aspired to copy the nearby colonies, the Roman urban model began its great diffusion. When Augustus, in his re-shaping of the western provinces, came to insist upon the city-state as the basic administrative cell, he would for the most part have been preaching to the converted.

Change is discernible in the archaeological record from the turn of the first centuries BC and AD, as central cities were founded and given planned and monumental aspects. It is also reflected in the generous distribution of Latin rights to those communities whose leaders had thus demonstrated their loyalty to Rome. This was especially the case in northern Italy, south-south-eastern Spain and southern Gaul. The tide of roman-ized urbanization was, however, running strongly elsewhere, for example in central Gaul. Here it was marked by the appearance of cities such as Autun, created by native

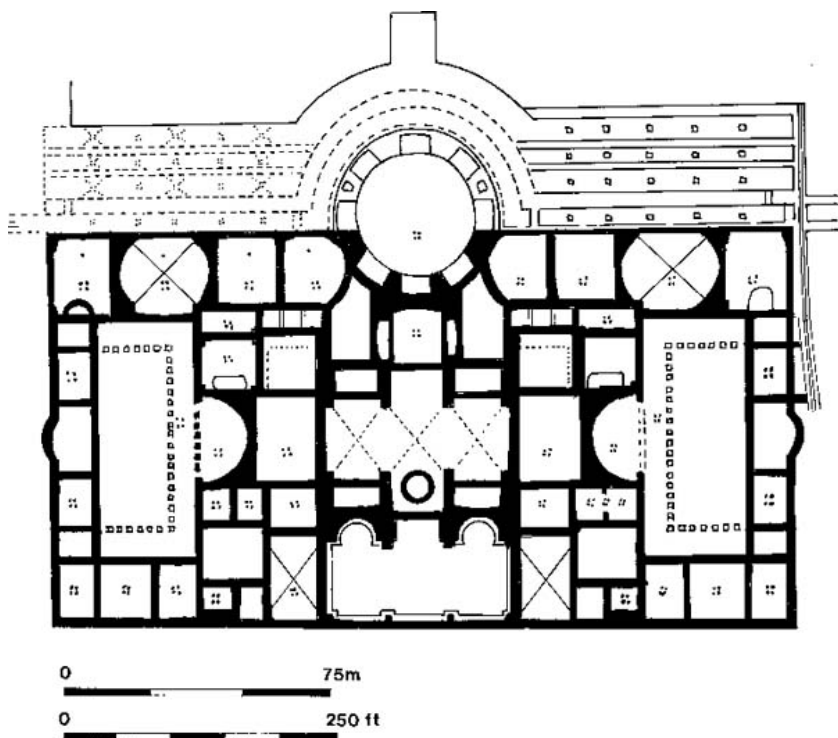


Figure 13.19 The baths of Caracalla, Rome (*after Février*)

communities on Roman lines at sites made important by the new road-system, probably often, as was later to be the case in Britain, first developed by Roman garrisons, planted to guard important junctions and other places (fig. 13.21). Indeed, the garrisoning of Roman troops within Gaul, and then, from *c.* 16 BC, their transference to the Rhine, not only provided opportunities for urbanization in the Gallic heartland, but also stimulated the urbanization of the frontier provinces. This included the foundation of two of the greatest cities of the Roman north-west, Cologne and Trier (figs 13.22 and 13.23). Unlike the east, where troops tended to be put into long-established garrison-towns, the west owed a good deal to the urbanizing power of the Roman army. In Britain, for example, military materials and expertise may even have been made available to certain native communities in the earliest days of city-building.

With the encouragement of rulers who were positively inclined directly to promote romanization through urbanization (for what began as a matter of accident became a principle of policy), western urbanization quickened and strengthened through the first century and into the second. However, it remained far from uniform. During the first

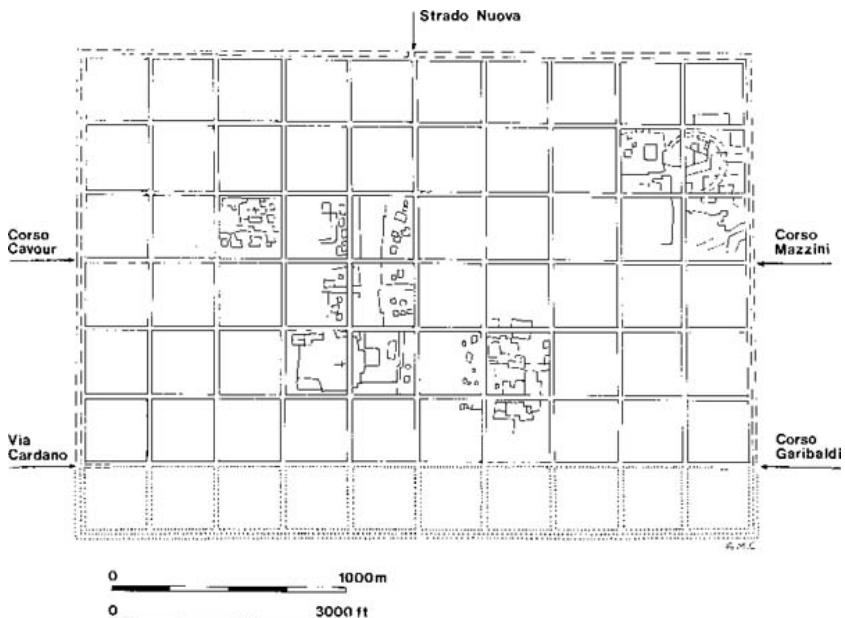


Figure 13.20 Plan of Pavia, Italy, illustrating the grid-iron cities of Lombardy (*after Chevallier*)

three-quarters of the first century the trail was blazed, ranked in order of success, by Italy, south and south-eastern Spain, southern Gaul and the province of Africa Proconsularis. Success in this field was generally rewarded with grants of higher status, although, oddly, as with Proconsularis, this was not always the case. The Flavian dynasty (AD 69–96) directed attention and approval to other areas. Although the assumption has been disputed, grants of citizen-privilege to communities in north and north-western Spain must surely suggest the existence of appreciable urbanization. There was further colonization in Proconsularis and Mauretania. Further, as has already been noted, under the Flavians, Agricola directly encouraged the urbanization of Britain, apparently still disappointing since the conquest of a generation earlier, and despite the precocious growth of St Albans (Verulamium) under Claudius and Nero ([fig. 13.24](#)). The establishment of colonies in the former legionary fortresses of Gloucester and Lincoln around the end of the dynasty would also have been useful in this respect ([fig. 13.25](#)). Under Trajan and Hadrian the cities of the African provinces enjoyed increased prosperity and renown as the last wave of direct colonization, which included the foundation of Timgad ([pl. 13.1](#)), built for veterans of the legion stationed in Africa (again underlining

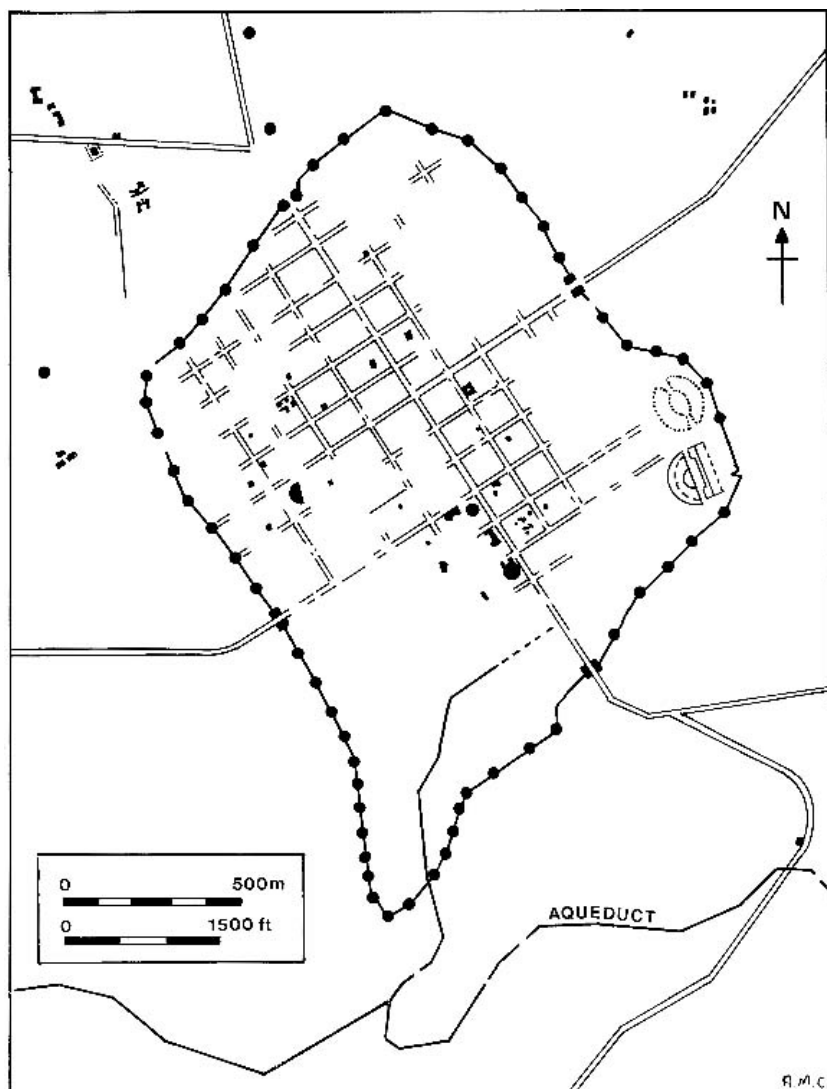


Figure 13.21 Plan of Autun, France (Augustodunum – ‘Augustusville’): the Gallic interpretation of the grid-iron city is more generous than its colonial originals (*after Février*)

the significance of the army as a powerful instrument of romanization), spread the zone of urbanization further to the south. Existing settlements increased in magnificence, and at last began to be accorded honorary municipal and colonial status on a generous scale. Neighbouring Mauretania also shared in this development. These emperors were also instrumental in furthering urbanization in northern Gaul, along the German

frontier, and in Britain. As the second century progressed the western cities as a whole moved increasingly together towards the Severan climax.

As has been emphasized, the Romans accepted established Greek architectural traditions, which enabled their cities to develop over a long period while maintaining a high

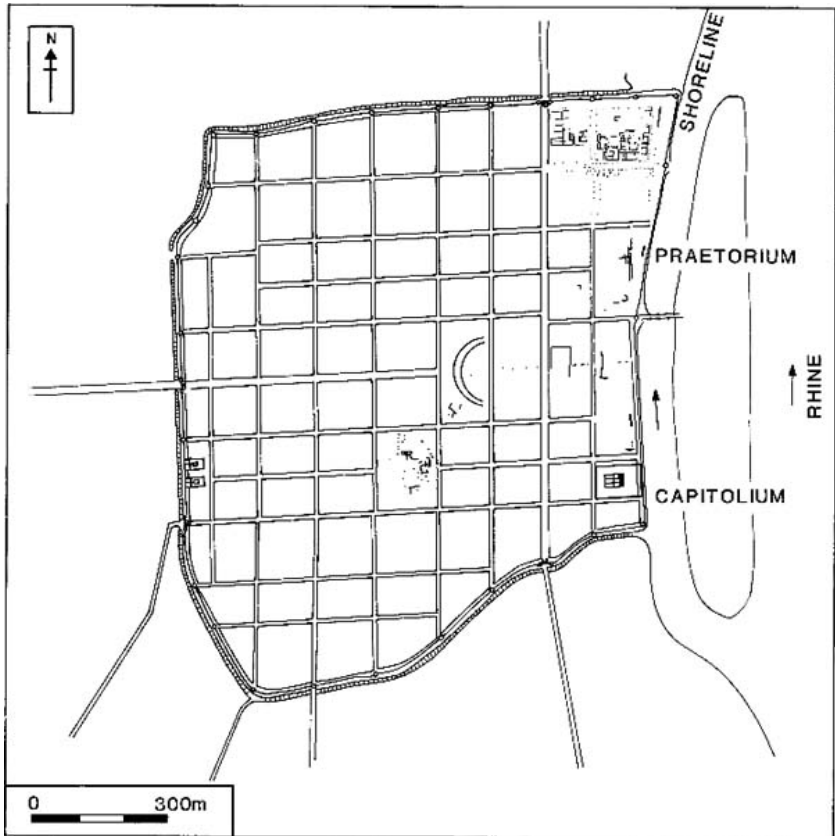


Figure 13.22 Plan of Cologne, Germany (after Doppelfeld)

degree of homogeneity. It must not, though, be assumed that Roman architects were enslaved by the past, and that they refused to experiment or change. Roman utilitarianism led to innovation and elegance. Increasing skills in the manufacture and handling of concrete, especially from the late first century AD, made feasible the construction of large and striking vaulted roofs. There was, indeed, a gradual abandonment of the restricted and angular interiors of Greek buildings and a movement towards the enveloping of space within curvilinear shells (pl. 13.10). At the same time,

in the field of ornamentation and decoration, Africa was evolving her own confident and exuberant baroque.

The western Roman cities also varied in their geographical distribution. Cities were at their most frequent in north Africa, where the province of Proconsularis, in particular the region of the Bagradas valley, was probably the most highly urbanized place in the whole Empire. Proconsularis contained over 200 cities and around Dougga there were ten within a 10 km (6 miles) radius (Picard, 1959, 48). Next, in decreasing order

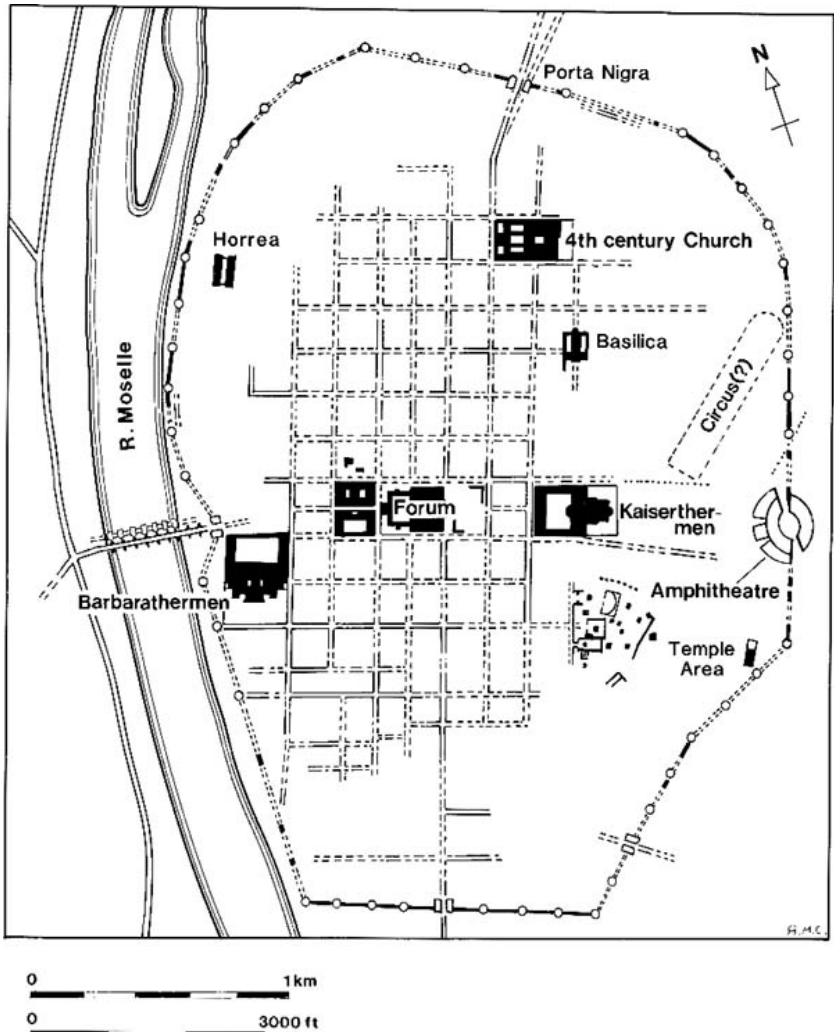


Figure 13.23 Plan of Trier, Germany (after Wightman)

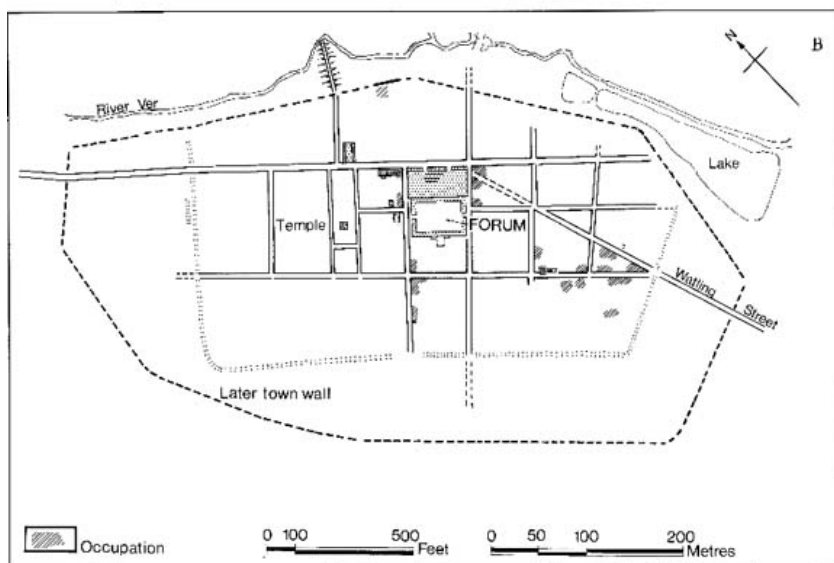
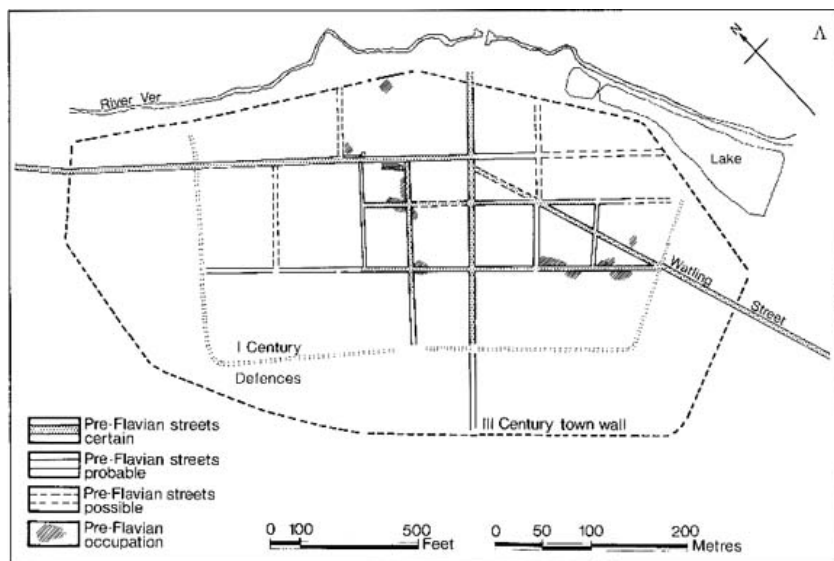
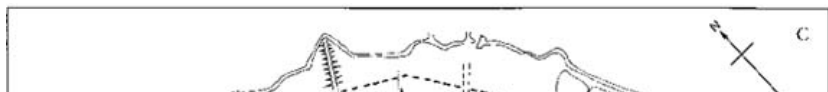
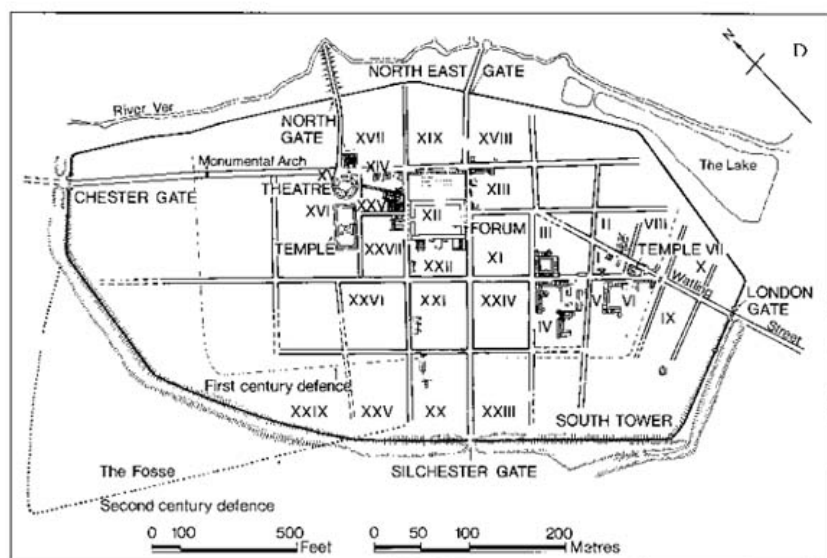
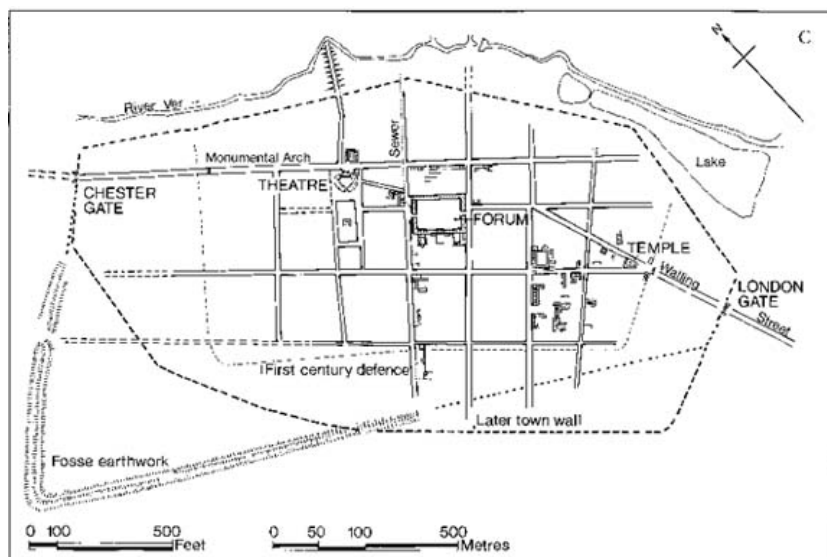


Figure 13.24 Verulamium, Britain:
 (A) Julio-Claudian; (B) late-Flavian; (C) late-Antonine; (D) fourth-century (*after Frere*)





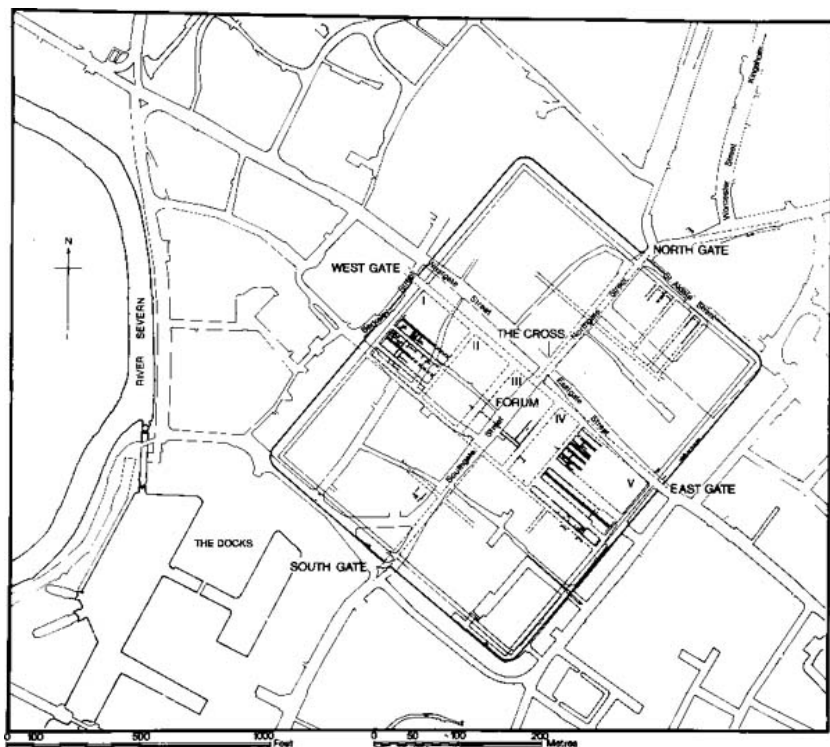


Figure 13.25 Plan of the early colony at Gloucester, Britain: the first colonists adapted the existing legionary buildings (after Hurst)

of city-density, came the Italian peninsula, south and south-eastern Spain, southern Gaul, northern Italy, the Rhône–Rhine corridor, south-eastern Britain and northern Gaul. However, it must be appreciated that this generalization has its problems. Above all, as has been earlier emphasized, it is too easy to concentrate on the cities, and ignore the subsidiary towns, thus virtually equating *state*-distribution with the general level of urbanization within a particular region. Scholars have been fond of comparing the hundreds of cities of Roman Africa with the meagre sixty-odd of the Three Gauls, to the disparagement of the latter. This is to ignore the frequency and vigour of the subsidiary towns, which must always be included in any assessment of the intensity of Gallic urbanization. Towns were also present in southern Gaul and in Africa, again not without importance. An accurate distribution map of *all* western urban agglomerations under the Roman Empire has yet to be drawn (cf. Pounds, 1969, 155, fig. 10).

The surface areas of the western cities are easier to assess than the size of their populations, although even here calculations are not entirely

straightforward. For example, it is easy to forget possible suburban expansion beyond city-walls (e.g. Timgad, cf. [pl. 13.1](#)), or to fail to appreciate that the latter, by accident or design, originally enclosed too generous an extent of land, which the city never fully occupied (e.g. Silchester, cf. [fig. 13.1](#)). As far as populations are concerned, there are very few ancient statistics, leaving us to deduce what we can from the likely productivity of the surrounding territory, the volume of piped water, the density of housing, the seating capacity of places of public entertainment, or inscriptions recording benefactions to the city-populace. None of these methods is reliable; even the last, which is probably the best, cannot, for example, distinguish between city-dwellers and non-urban citizens usually resident in the countryside. Such figures as are accepted cover an extremely wide range, from Rome, occupying *c.* 2,000 ha (5,000 acres) and accommodating a (high imperial) population of the order 500,000–1,000,000, down to places such as Caistor-by-Norwich, of just 14 ha (35 acres), and with probably no more than a few hundred permanent residents. Between lay the provincial capitals, such as Lyon and Cologne, each containing about 25,000 souls; Carthage, at 300 ha (750 acres), and a population of *c.* 250,000 was exceptional. The average Italian city, for example Pompeii, may have had a population of about 20,000; the average Gallic, such as Paris, about 8,000. In addition, again, there were the towns, most of which were probably much smaller than the cities, although in certain areas, for example the Three Gauls, some particularly prosperous ones may have been larger than some minor cities. Clearly, though the western cities displayed a similar appearance, it is impossible to talk of an overall average size. This was the result of differences in the historical experience of urbanization, region by region and period by period. In this respect, to compare the colonies of northern Italy and southern Gaul, the capitals of the constituent nations of the Three Provinces and Britain, and the cities of north Africa is not to set like against like. Much more fruitful is to perceive the underlying pattern, namely the absence of smooth gradation in the figures. There were a few very large cities, and very many small ones, a hierarchy which closely resembles those of other pre-industrial societies, where the economy required at least ninety per cent of the total population at work on the land (Sjoberg, 1960, 83). Large city populations came about only when governments diverted to specific centres more resources than they could normally provide for themselves. But comparison with other societies also reminds us that the social and economic importance of the pre-industrial city does not necessarily fit with modern conceptions of size. After London, only fourteen towns in

seventeenth-century England had more than 30,000 inhabitants, and most had fewer than 2,500, yet all played considerable political, social and economic roles (Laslett, 1971, 57–8).

The main role of the western Roman city was to serve as the administrative centre of its state. A wider political function lay in its usefulness in directing provincial enthusiasm and resources into public displays of romanization, thus diverting aristocrats from sedition. Indeed, the more cities a region possessed the more equestrians and senators it produced, from families experienced in local affairs now willing to proceed to give service to the empire. The cities thus provided a valuable preliminary training for imperial administrators. They also had a more straightforward educational role. It was their schools and universities, for instance at Marseille, which propagated the classical culture which was the cement of the imperial upper-classes, allowing people from different races and different backgrounds to speak to each other in the same language and with reference to a common heritage (pl. 13.11). They provided more of the same for less wealthy and literate audiences in their plethora of public monuments, which trumpeted the power and beneficence of Rome, and the names and features of the emperors who maintained her Peace (pl. 13.7). Additionally, by accommodating visitors, official and unofficial, such as administrators, soldiers, craftsmen and traders, from all over the Empire, they were important cultural melting-pots. Through the cities, as through the army, Latin became the *lingua franca* of western life; and later through the cities Christianity achieved its western foothold (Part 10, Chapter 4).

The economic function of the cities and towns remains hotly disputed (see Finley, 1977). Some communities, such as Carthage, Lyon, Cologne and London, clearly derived a substantial part of their livelihood from trading and manufacturing activities. Many, however, argue that these were exceptional, and that most cities did not add to the wealth of the economy in which they were set. Such goods and services as they produced were for city-consumption only, thus benefiting only that relatively small proportion of the population who were permanent city-dwellers, made up of the local and imperial elites and their families, together with those who served their needs. In fact, the urban centres, where they were not themselves just large agricultural villages accommodating farmers who went out each day to work the surrounding fields, a practice which may well have been common in north Africa, were parasitic on a fundamentally agrarian world in which large-scale, long-distance industrial and commercial activity played little part. City-based elites had attained a level of power which enabled them to wring more from the countryside than the original surplus which had

brought them into being (Sjoberg, 1960, 118); on this depended their extravagant, essentially wasteful and economically sterile lifestyle. It has, indeed, been postulated that the dense urbanization of north Africa represented reckless and unnecessary *overdevelopment* of the land (Deman, 1975, 17f). However, it is possible to adopt a rather less negative approach. Societies vary in their assessment of their own needs, and how these should be satisfied. In the Graeco-Roman world the city embodied the 'good life' to which all aspired. Given the way it was run, all who belonged to it had access to its facilities and could take pride in its achievements. It provided well-being for many, not luxury for a few (Thompson, 1982; Ward-Perkins, 1974, 33). All reckoned it a worth-while object for the investment of spare resources. Moreover, the cities were not insulated from their society. Whatever their prime purpose, they must have been affected by the general rise in economic activity, which reached its peak in the second and third centuries. Their own growth, necessitating a wide variety of productive human activities, both reflected and stimulated high Roman prosperity. Recently, too, the importance of long-distance trade in the Roman Empire, channelled through the cities and towns, has found new champions (Hopkins, 1978; 1980) (pls 13.12 and 13.13). In fact it seems unrealistic to deny these places a significant economic role which, though it may well have been consequent upon their administrative functions, was not thereby inferior to them – witness the spectacular commercial success of Lyon, capital of the Three Gauls. In addition, the healthy development of the towns, whose growth was much less likely to be inflated by administrative and cultural pressures, suggests positive economic forces which were elsewhere partially hidden (pl. 13.14). Certainly, one of the most dramatic social phenomena of the age was the appearance of self-aware commercial and manufacturing populations, often grouped into properly constituted trades-associations, with rules of procedure based upon the constitutions of the urban communities which gave them birth (Clavel and Lévêque, 1971, 245). Africa, simply by providing so many urban centres, allowed the most successful of such people to rise at least as high as decurial level. Even at the bottom of the social scale, the cities and towns perhaps had something to offer by providing occasional work for the rural poor, whose chronic underemployment has always been a feature of the pre-industrial society.

One function which the cities and towns of the High Empire did not perform was that of military protection. Many existing cities retained or rebuilt their walls, and some new ones were endowed with them, but this was generally a badge of status. Only very few places, in the most exposed areas, for example Cherchel, in Algeria, were defended for strategic

reasons. The majority of western nucleated settlements were open – an outstanding measure of the effectiveness of Roman order.

Of course, we are still far from a fully satisfying reconstruction of western urban life under the High Empire. Archaeology, architecture, literature and inscriptions afford us only the shell of urban society: intriguing, sometimes beautiful, but generally empty. Pompeii and Herculaneum offer fascinating insights into everyday urban life, but as a whole we can only guess at, say, the endless aristocratic squabbles which split families, enlivened forum-gossip, and manifested themselves in the provision of fine buildings (p. 347 above). There is very little idea of the number, character and meaning of the pagan religious ceremonies which provided citizens with entertainment, diversion and, perhaps, some relaxation of normal social restrictions; these last were very important in a society characterized by staggering differences in wealth and status, expressed no doubt in dress, speech, even standards of health. And, for all its confidence and glitter, the western city had its seamier side. Most places must have closed down virtually completely at nightfall, leaving their pitch-dark streets to prostitutes, beggars and thieves (Sjoberg, 1960, 104; Février *et al.*, 1980, 306). When dawn came, and shop-boys took down the shutters, no doubt they whistled the popular songs of the day. It reveals much about the paucity of our evidence that there is no idea what these were.

During the late-second and early-third centuries previously unwallled cities in Britain were fortified following serious internal and external troubles. In the middle years of the third century the whole Empire was convulsed by further political and economic crisis, and by barbarian raids which both precipitated and were precipitated by these inner calamities. Towards the end of the same century Rome herself received a new defensive circuit, the first since the early-fourth century BC (fig. 13.26); and in Gaul a number of urban centres were wiped out, while several surviving Gallic cities took on the appearance of grim redoubts, defended by stout ramparts built from masonry torn from once proud buildings of the high imperial period. The Late Empire had arrived.

It has been conventionally held that the fourth century saw the final collapse of the *polis*-ideal. Indeed, it is possible to argue that even before it had spread into the west the *polis* was already out of date, having been overtaken by the hellenistic kingdoms, and imperial Rome. The city-state had continued to exist because it was still regarded as the natural unit of administration; and indeed, despite its weaknesses, it remained a great powerhouse for the maintenance and propagation of classical culture.

However, from the second century AD, the significance of local patriotism grew weaker in the minds of those who mattered, namely the provincial aristocrats. They had exploited the city by using it to become fully-fledged members of the Roman world-state. Local office was increasingly regarded as an inferior and excessively expensive privilege, best to be avoided. The Empire, however, still relied upon the cities for local routine administration, therefore measures had to be taken to arrest the rot. The office of *curator rei publicae* (imperial auditor) which had developed in the second century to curb excessive enthusiasm by local magistrates, underwent a change of character, and was used increasingly by the imperial government to prop up a sagging system of city administration. However, the intrusion of central government served only further to undermine local autonomy, and could not prevent the well-to-do from neglecting their duties. By the fourth century they had entrenched themselves in rural retreats, and the burden of civic responsibility was shifted on to the shoulders of lesser aristocratic families, who could ill afford such responsibilities but who were even more bound to them by law. Much of later Roman legislation concerns itself with the problem of the shortage of provincial decurions, especially in the west. The decline of local aristocratic *aemulatio* spelled the end of the classical city-state. New priorities had anyway asserted themselves. Greater

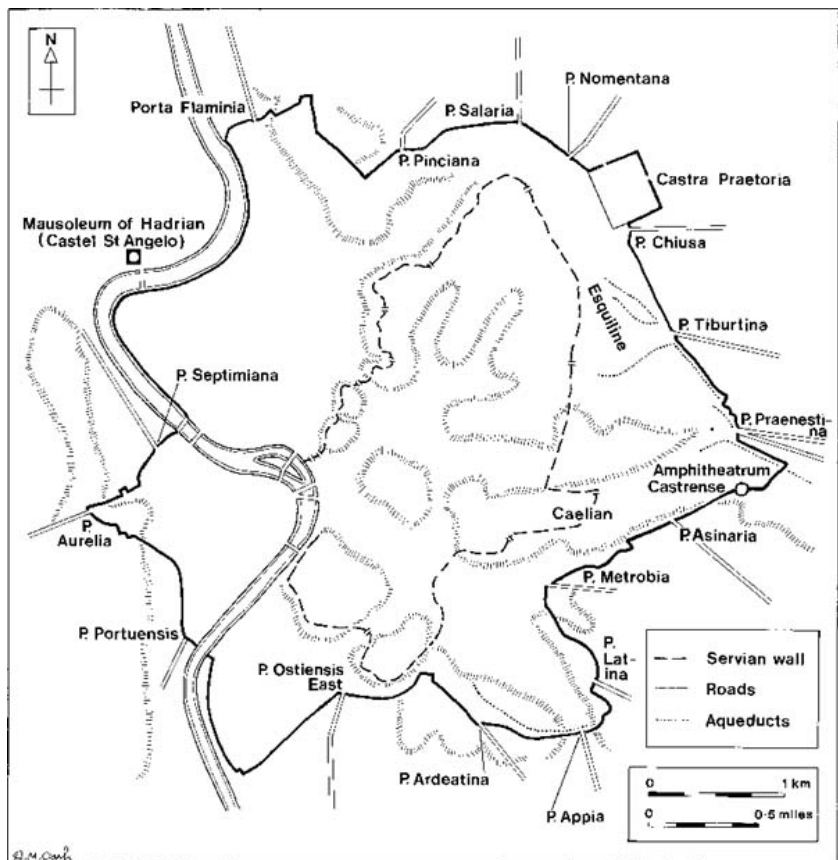


Figure 13.26 Plan of the third-century, Aurelian circuit of Rome (*after Todd*)

and more efficient taxation caused much of the wealth which had earlier been available for local spending to be channelled into imperial projects, such as forts and palaces; and the Christian church competed extremely successfully for resources, both public and private.

However, the conventional picture of the decline of western urbanization is not immune from criticism. For example, it has long been realized that in Britain city-life remained strong into the fourth, and even the fifth, century. In recent years an even

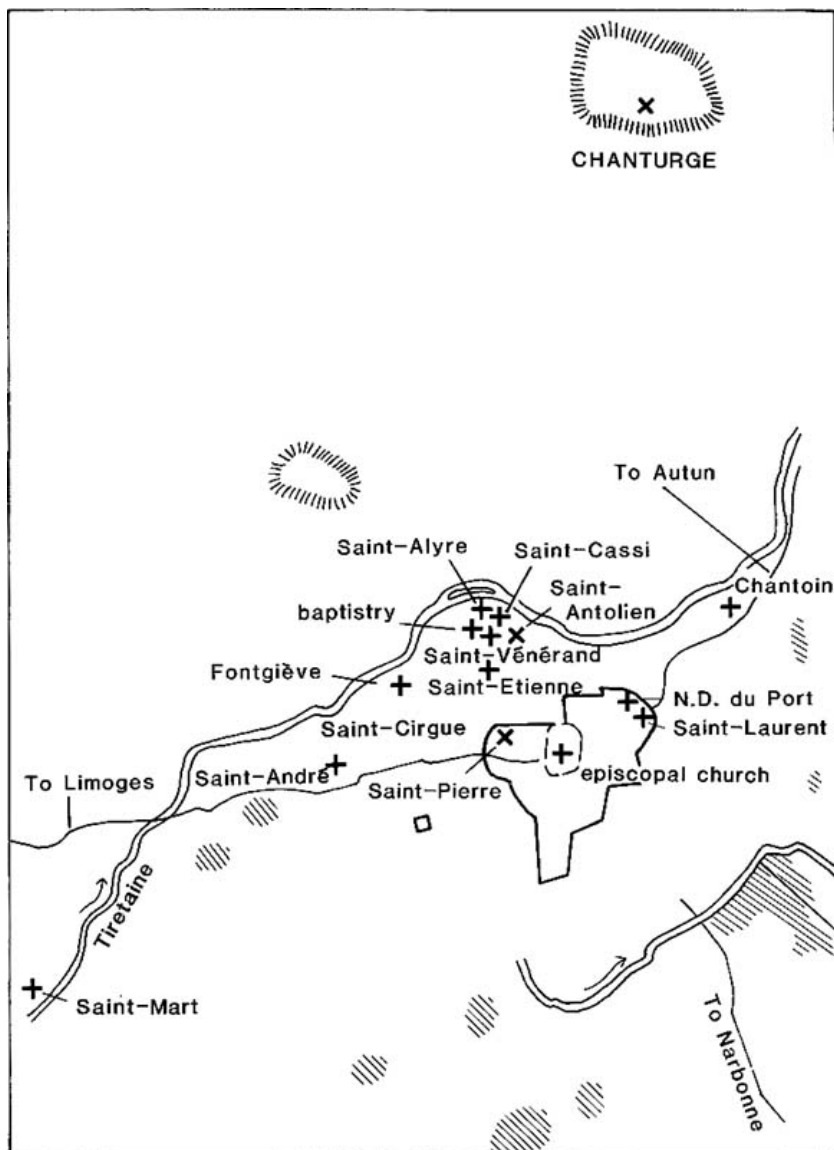


Figure 13.27 Clermont-Ferrand, France. Christian cemeteries and associated places of worship and congregation develop beyond the redoubt (*after Février*)

stronger case has been made for the continuing vitality of the north African cities until as late as the arrival of Islam in the seventh century (Kolendo and Kotula, 1977; Lepelley, 1979). Both these areas had escaped the worst horrors of the third-century crisis, but this cannot be seen as the main cause of continuing urban prosperity, since it has also been recognized in Gaul,

especially in the appearance of Christian buildings inside and outside the new defences, which, as centres of religious administration and pilgrimage, must have assured constant traffic to and fro (fig. 13.27). Additionally, in Gaul, as in Italy, literary evidence testifies to the continuing importance of the cities as late as the late fourth and early fifth centuries. The cities of Spain have also of late been allowed a more prosperous later imperial history. Even the western townships do not seem to have succumbed completely to the third-century crisis and its aftermath. In Britain a number were fortified presumably because they fulfilled some important governmental function, and in Gaul, consequent upon Diocletian's thorough reorganization of provincial administration, some even won city-status.

In fact the western cities could not die. The later imperial government, more extensive and bureaucratic than its predecessor, needed them as centres of imperial administration, and as places where local members of the vastly increased imperial bureaucracy could be compelled to gather to demonstrate their loyalty to the emperor (Löhken, 1982, 93f). The imperial court had left Rome to shuttle along the threatened northern and eastern frontiers; the cities where it rested became temporary imperial headquarters and virtual sub-capitals. Provinces were divided for greater administrative efficiency; each new division required its own capital. As the government led, so the Church followed, with ecclesiastical reflecting imperial administration; and where emperors, prefects, governors and bishops, and their staffs, resided there too congregated traders and craftsmen. Indeed, the relative decline in importance of the city of Rome brought newfound wealth and splendour to provincial sub-capitals. The fourth century saw the heyday of Roman Trier (fig. 13.23). Local aristocrats were needed to operate the system, though some were plainly unwilling to perform their duties, so arousing imperial wrath. However, the unquestioning acceptance of the decline of local patriotism and autonomy has its problems. It has recently been shown that the *curatores rei publicae*, particularly after their office had been assimilated into the normal hierarchy of local administration, were hardly the ogres they have been painted (Burton, 1979). Other evidence from Gaul and, especially, from north Africa, reveals that local office was prized, and even contested, deep into the fourth century. Despite changes and pressing problems, late imperial civilization in the west was still very much an urban civilization, as is clear from the pages of St Augustine's *Confessions*, although the African Father is at pains to point out that the citizenship of an earthly city, Carthage, Milan, even Rome, is inferior to that of the City of God.

What had happened was probably just a shift in priorities. Late-Roman

western society had not regressed to the point of no longer needing urban centres. Indeed, by



Figure 13.28 The Western Empire. Places mentioned in the text of Part 5

pre-industrial standards it remained strong and sophisticated, and so both required and supported cities and towns. On the other hand, it seems to have outgrown the city-state, and the architectural-aesthetic definition by which the city was deliberately and selfconsciously used as a vehicle to express the totality of the values and aspirations of the community in which it was embedded. Other concerns had forced the city from the centre of the stage, to become just part of society. The great western aristocrats balanced their activity between town and country. The rate of change varied certainly

much more quickly in Gaul than in Africa where the very density of cities, and the distance from the threatened frontiers kept old feelings alive for longer. Overall, however, we may perhaps even discern the re-emergence of the pre-Roman western town – less stylized, and certainly less monumentally magnificent, but much more flexible and therefore perhaps enjoying greater potential than the Graeco-Roman city. ‘City-life’ was becoming ‘life in towns’ (cf. Wachter, 1975a, 411f), which barbarian invasion, epidemic and the political upheaval which accompanied the disintegration of the western empire in the fifth century would be unable completely to destroy ([fig. 13.28](#)).



13.1 Aerial view of Timgad, Algeria. Note the forum at the intersection of the two main streets of the classic grid-iron system, the triumphal arch spanning the *decumanus* and the development of the less-regular suburban buildings



13.2 The 'Maison Carrée', Nîmes, France. The forum temple dedicated to the Augustan dynasty: 'a perfect masterpiece of Roman classicism'



13.3 Model of a rich road-side cemetery, Bonn, Germany. Note the magnificence and variety of tombs available to those who could pay



13.4 Aries, France. A Caesarian colony, endowed from an early date with both a theatre and an amphitheatre



13.5 The *castellum divisorum*, Nîmes: the water basin built to receive and distribute the supply brought to the city by the Pont-du-Gard aqueduct



13.6 Traces of four parallel wooden water-pipes show as dark stains in the surrounding soil at Colchester, Britain



13.7 Triumphal arch at Orange



13.8 Aerial view of Cuicul, Algeria. The original foundation of AD 96–7 to the north reflects the desire for geometric regularity, even on a steep and narrow spur. The later, less regular development can be seen to the south



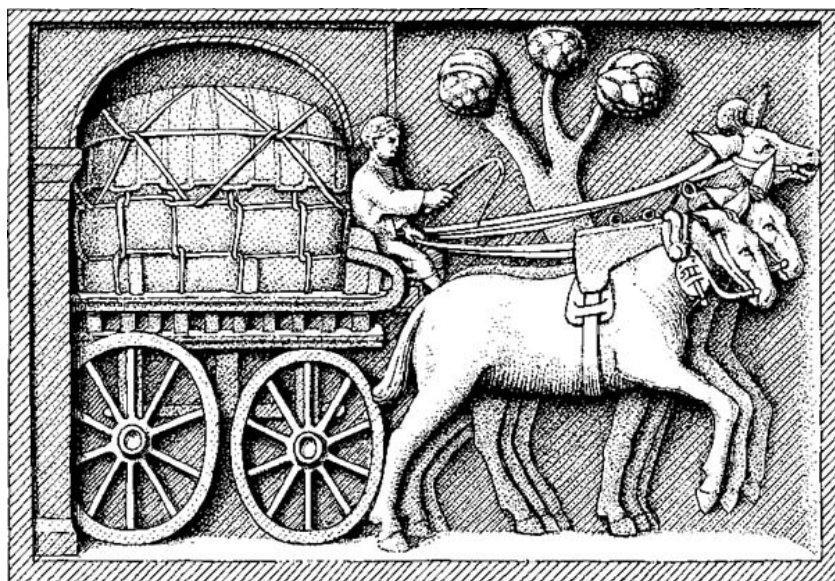
13.9 Aerial view of Lepcis Magna: the city at its Severan height



13.10 The Pantheon, Rome; the classic example of Roman ability to capture space in a completely new way. The great dome is virtually a concrete eggshell



13.11 School scene from Neumagen, Germany



13.12 Heavy transport of woollen cloth by road: the Igel monument, Germany



13.13 Heavy transport of woollen cloth by river: the Igel monument, Germany



• TOWNSHIPS • AND • VILLAGES •

Andrew Poulter

Within the Roman Empire, the distinction between cities and other types of civilian settlements was clearly defined by law, never determined simply by considerations of size, economic or social importance; it was Rome which granted the city its charter or confirmed its legal status by treaty. Excluded from the rank of city and denied the full rights of municipal autonomy, there nevertheless existed numerous settlements which were important local centres, occasionally even larger and more prosperous than many of the smaller cities of the empire. Townships grew up around the legionary and auxiliary forts and large villages played an important role in providing for the needs of their inhabitants and those of the surrounding rural population; both types of settlement possessed a variety of industrial, commercial and social functions which distinguished them from smaller agricultural hamlets which provided none of these more specialized services. Both townships and villages differed also in more than just status from the cities of the Empire; *coloniae*, *municipia*, *civitates foederatae* and the tribal centres all exhibited a general uniformity in their administrative organization, their regular provision of a grid-system of streets and similar range of public buildings; they were planned foundations and their character reflected their purpose, and often their origin, as instruments of imperial policy ([Part 5, Chapter 13](#)). The unchartered township and village often attempted to provide some of the facilities offered to urban communities. The townships shared a common origin and a certain uniformity in their economic and administrative organization. However,

both villages and townships were rarely official creations. They developed their own particular character as local conditions and opportunities allowed. Some were obliged to perform duties imposed upon them by central government and by the provincial authorities but they always remained responsive to the needs of their own population. They reflected, in their development, the variety of social and economic conditions which existed in different provinces and within different regions of the Roman Empire.

The Roman armies of the Late Republic and Early Empire, even when actively campaigning, attracted camp-followers, willing to endure the hardships and not inconsiderable risks involved in selling goods to the soldiers and providing off-duty entertainment. When permanent quarters were established for the garrisons of the Empire during the course of the first century AD, townships rapidly developed around the forts and fortresses; they attracted traders, merchants and craftsmen eager to provide for the needs of the soldiers and to relieve them of their pay. The military authorities retained an ambivalent attitude towards these communities; while their usefulness to the soldiers was recognized and tolerated, their activities and the development of the civilian settlement was restricted so as not to undermine military discipline nor to interfere with the garrisons' official duties.

The townships which grew around the legionary fortresses were particularly populous; legionaries were well-paid and the large numbers of soldiers offered the prospect of substantial profits to the enterprising civilians prepared to take advantage of the opportunities of the market. By the mid-first century AD, the legionary fortresses on the Rhine had attracted considerable numbers of civilians. Outside the double legionary fortress at Xanten (Vetera), housing a garrison of more than ten thousand men, civilians built a large, sprawling township. At Mainz (Mogontiacum), the township, which already existed by the early first century AD, spread south of the legionary fortress and smaller, satellite settlements grew in size, notably on the banks of the Rhine, close to the port at 'Dimesser Ort', where goods to be supplied to the fortress could be unloaded and stored (fig. 14.1). Although the native population soon participated in the development of the extramural settlements, the dominant role was played by Romano-Gallic and Italian traders and merchants. The occupants of the township outside the fortress at Nijmegen (Noviomagus) would seem to have been immigrants for the most part and the settlement attracted few native settlers during the first half of the first century AD. As the townships increased in size and importance, so they became more attractive to

veterans who, after discharge, preferred to remain close to their comrades still serving in the army and chose to invest their money in commercial or industrial enterprise. The townships also housed the families of serving soldiers; although not permitted to marry before retirement from the army, soldiers regularly formed permanent liaisons with local women who settled with their children in the extramural settlements where they could be close to their menfolk. By AD 69 the township at Vetera was so large and prosperous that it resembled a city (Tacitus, *Histories* 4. 21). Despite appearances, the settlement occupied military land and was only permitted to exist so long as the legionary commander approved of its presence. When the garrison at Vetera resisted the attack of the rebel, Civilis, the township was systematically levelled to prevent its use by the enemy as cover for an attack on the legionary fortifications. Exceptionally, measures were taken to protect the civilian community in moments of crisis; during the invasion of eastern Asia Minor by the Alans in AD 134, the governor of

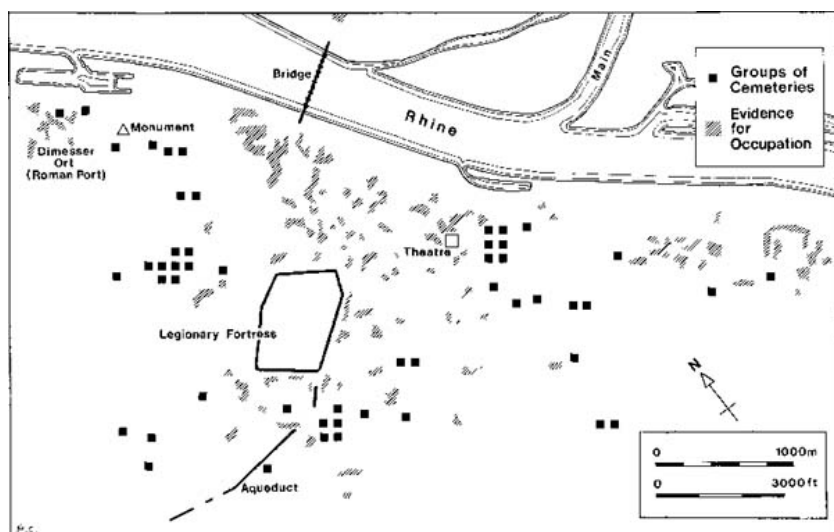


Figure 14.1 Settlements around the legionary fortress at Mainz (after Esser)

Bithynia and Cappadocia thoughtfully provided a walled enclosure to protect the community of traders and veterans living outside the fort of Phasis in the Caucasus (Arrian, *Periplus* 9). More often, the immediate needs of the army came first. On the Danube, Deutsch-Altenburg (Carnuntum) possessed a large extramural settlement by the second century; buildings encircled the fortress on three sides; its irregular street system spread out to serve the growing township which eventually covered some 130 ha (327 acres). However, the construction of shops and houses

was carefully restricted; a 'free fire' zone was maintained for a distance of at least 100 m (109 yards) on each side of the fortress; civilian buildings were not permitted to encroach on the legion's defences. At Caerleon (Isca), shops and private dwellings had been erected on the west side of the fortress but were summarily demolished towards the middle of the second century, no doubt on the orders of the legionary legate, when it was decided to develop the site as a military parade ground.

Despite their lack of municipal autonomy and the enforcement of strict military control over their development, the townships were permitted considerable freedom to administer their own affairs. The term *canabae*, literally 'the hutted encampment', though it accurately describes the original appearance of these settlements, was also used as an official title to describe legionary townships. The *canabae* at Mogontiacum is attested by the middle of the first century AD as an administrative organization representing the interests of the Roman citizens and veterans; they formed their own corporate organization with an executive president (*curator*). By the second century, the inhabitants of the township (*canabenses*) also had an officer in charge of finances (*quaestor*), an assembly (*ordo*) to which Roman veterans, who invariably possessed Roman citizenship, and other Roman citizens could be elected, although native *peregrini*, by then certainly living within the townships, were not permitted to hold office in the administration of the *canabae*. At Szöny (Brigetio), on the Danube, the township outside the legionary fortress possessed its own corporate organization headed by a *curator* during the first century but by the second, it had its own *quaestor*, *ordo* and the functions of the *curator* were replaced by two executive magistrates (*magistri*). A change in title is evidenced also at Budapest (Aquincum) where, before the second century, the organization of the township was officially described as consisting of 'veterans and Roman citizens settled close to the legion' (*veterani et cives Romani consistentes ad legionem II Adiutricem*), a description which defined their status; the community occupied (*consistentes*) but did not own the land outside the legionary fortress which remained imperial property, controlled by the army. During the second century, the township adopted the shorter title of *canabae* and although Aquincum, like other townships, remained dependent upon the military it seems likely that Hadrian introduced reforms which granted the legionary townships greater freedom to administer their own affairs and acquire additional magistracies in imitation of the chartered cities (Mócsy, 1974, 142). The *canabae* at Silistra (Durostorum) was permitted to use the imperial name in its title (*canabae Aeliae*) and, at Lambaesis, the township was allowed to use the same

honorary epithet for its assembly (*curia Aelia*). Of these developed, pseudo-municipal organizations, the township of the *veterani et cives Romani consistentes ad legionis V Macedonicae* near Măcin (Troesmis) was probably typical. The *canabenses* had two magistrates with executive authority, *magistri canabensium*, a *quaestor*, an officer in charge of public buildings and markets (*aedilis*) and an *ordo* whose members (*decuriones*) were probably selected for office from amongst the ex-magistrates at five-yearly intervals by the *quinquennalis canabensium*, an officer who exercised considerable authority by attaining this prestigious post; two men who were honoured with this responsibility, each gratefully donated two hundred and fifty *denarii* to the *curia canabiarum*. The community of the *canabenses* erected its own religious dedications and public buildings but the *ordo* retained the right to vote for the erection of statues (*decreto suo*) in honour of provincial governors and the local legionary commanders; a suitable display of deference to the authorities who had the final say in controlling the affairs of the township.

Although the early legionary fortresses, such as Ivoševci (Burnum) and Gardun (Tilurium) in Dalmatia, were not always well-placed to attract civilian settlements (Wilkes, 1969, 110), the establishment of the legionary bases along the Rhine and Danube provided attractive markets which were easily supplied by ships, bringing all kinds of luxury goods from different parts of the Empire; Italian and Gallic fine tableware, wine and oil from Spain, high-quality bronze vessels from Campania, spices from the Far East and exotic glass-ware from Egypt. Roman citizens, traders from Cologne (*colonia Agrippinensis*) in the Rhineland, settled at Aquincum, and were joined by merchants from Thrace and the eastern provinces. Outside the fortress at Chester (Deva) in Britain, a family from Egypt settled in the *canabae* no doubt for purposes of trade. At Mogontiacum, one veteran became a merchant and specialized in selling weapons (*negotiator gladiarius*). Each of the larger commercial interests established their own associations such as that attested at Windisch (Vindonissa), comprising traders in fish-sauce and beans. Mogontiacum had its own corporation of money-lenders. Human merchandise was also for sale; an Illyrian, Dasius Breucus from Alburnus Maior in Dacia bought a young man called Apalaustus in the *canabae* of Apulum for 600 *denarii*. Local industries specialized in pottery manufacture, leather and metal working, and townships often developed trade with peoples beyond the frontiers.

The *canabae* were concentrated on the roads leading up to the legionary fortress. Houses were simple, rectangular structures, built of timber and their narrow frontages jostled for position along the major thoroughfares

where the greatest traffic and the most customers offered the best chance of business. Other houses occupied winding streets and alleyways spreading out from the main roads which passed through the centre of the township. The main buildings could be as much as 50 m (55 yards) in length, the front portion often open to the street and serving as a shop which was closed off from the street by a wooden shutter at the end of the day's business. Behind, the buildings were regularly subdivided and used as living accommodation and workshops or for storage of goods for sale. Additional concentrations of settlement grew up close to the fortress. At Mogontiacum, subsidiary *vici*, wards of the *canabae*, developed in the vicinity of the fortress but away from the primary settlement around the south gate of the legionary camp (fig. 14.1). By the second century, the advancement of the imperial frontier into Germany and the development of trade beyond the Rhine encouraged the rapid development of a new area on the road leading from the fortress to the bridge across the river; its route was lined by well-built stone houses, equipped with mosaics and at least one public building decorated with its own colonnade. The second century saw a general rise in the prosperity of the townships outside the legionary camps. Deva could boast several large public buildings and Carnuntum, despite the foundation by Hadrian of a city only 2 kilometres (1½ miles) from the fortress, continued to prosper as late as the Severan period, its houses decorated with figure-mosaics and wall-paintings, no doubt accommodating the richer traders who preferred the commercial life of the *canabae* to that of the neighbouring city. Carnuntum also possessed an impressive public building just outside the legionary fortress. Entered through a colonnade on its north side, the visitor passed through a cross-hall, into a courtyard surrounded by storerooms or shops, then through a second forum-like court before reaching a basilical hall which probably acted as an administrative building and audience chamber. This large building, 220 m (242 yards) long and 180 m (198 yards) wide, must have functioned both as a market and administrative complex for the *canabenses*; in such a building the *ordo* of the *canabae* at Troesmis must have met to discuss the affairs of the community and vote upon proposals to erect statues in honour of its more eminent patrons.

The importance of these settlements was often acknowledged by the grant of full municipal autonomy. The *municipia*, created at Carnuntum and Aquincum in the early-second century must have drawn upon the thriving townships already established outside the legionary fortresses for their citizens. The fortress of Melitene, founded as late as AD 70, already had a sufficiently populous extramural settlement for the creation of a city also

by the early-second century. Sometimes, the reward of a charter was delayed. A *municipium* was created at Durostorum only in the late-second century. Mogontiacum received municipal status a century later. The creation of *municipia* close to the legionary fortresses presented problems. Not until the Severan period was a settlement outside the fortress itself granted municipal rights. Such caution is understandable; depriving the military of control of such lands by handing its administration over to a city could result in conflicts of interest. The usual expedient was to establish the new town at a respectable distance, between 1½ and 2 kilometres (1–1½ miles) from the fortress, as at Lambaesis, Aquincum and Carnuntum. It has been suggested that these *municipia* established close to legionary fortresses involved the elevation of an existing village to municipal status and one located outside the territory controlled by the legion (Vittinghoff, 1968, 135–6; 1970, 346–8; Mócsy, 1974, 139–40). However, legions are known to have possessed extensive lands (*Territorium legionis*), reserved for military use (Mócsy, 1972, 133–68) and it would seem most improbable that before the creation of a *municipium*, any village only 2 kilometres (ij miles) from a fortress would have been any less dependent on military control than the settlement immediately outside the fortress. It seems more likely that the choice of site for a *municipium* in the vicinity of a legionary fortress was a purely practical decision. The city took over for its own use a sizable portion of the legion's former territory and its site was selected for the convenience of its citizens, while ensuring that it lay at some distance from the fortress so as to avoid any conflict between civilian and military authorities; the immediate environs of the fortress, for military reasons, had to be retained under the control of the legionary legate (Poulter, 1983, 78–82).

There may also have been another facet to the relationship between *canabae* and legion. Although the military were responsible for their own pottery kilns (*figlinae castris*) and legionaries were certainly detailed to look after cattle and horses required for military use, there is no reason to believe that the soldiers would normally engage in farming military lands. Still, the army required feeding and the extensive territories assigned to the legionary fortresses and which are known to have existed in Spain, Dalmatia and Germany, would be an obvious source of agricultural produce. As noted for Mogontiacum, the *canabae* included not only the settlement immediately outside the fortress but also subsidiary communities living at least 2 kilometres (1¼ miles) away. Also 2 kilometres (1¼ miles) north of the fortress of Strasbourg (Argentorate), at Königshofen, there was an important industrial site dependent upon the

legionary township (*vicus canabarium*). It seems that the organization of the *canabae* could include a variety of settlements at a distance from the fortress but still on military land. The legion at Lambaesis took a keen interest in village settlements. Legionaries were engaged in building operations in the *vicus* of Verecunda, 2 kilometres (1¼ miles) from the fortress and the legionary legate was responsible for passing details of an imperial rescript to the *magistri* of the *vicus* of Lamiggiga, about 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the fortress of Lambaesis. Whether these settlements were on an imperial estate or within the *territorium legionis*, the army was clearly responsible for their welfare (Fentress, 1979, 134–42). The inhabitants of the township at Lambaesis itself would seem to have been engaged in agriculture and the cultivation of vines. It seems not unlikely that the military lands were farmed by communities of Roman veterans and peregrine natives settled in villages and, given the evidence for the control of settlement at a distance from a legionary fortress by the organization of the *canabae*, it may well have been through this organization that the legion at Lambaesis arranged for the collection of agricultural supplies. Such an arrangement would explain the remarkable degree of freedom permitted to townships since they performed an important role in feeding the army. It would also explain why the *canabae* at Kostolac (Viminacium) was rebuilt by the legionary garrison; the township was as useful to the legion as the legionary market and lands were important to the *canabenses*. However, the foundation of *municipia* close to legionary fortresses and the award of military land to the new city, which must have followed, may well have reduced the importance of the *canabenses* as civilian administrators of the *territorium legionis*. Although Aquincum and Carnuntum possessed flourishing townships engaged in commerce and industry after the creation of *municipia*, the case of Durostorum may well be more typical; after the foundation of the *municipium Aelium*, by Marcus Aurelius, the *canabae Aeliae* had declined to a small settlement by the early third century, its community of veterans and *peregrini* still engaged in the traditional occupations of trade and shipping but no longer possessing the status and economic importance of the Antonine township.

The soldiers stationed in auxiliary forts also attracted civilian settlements. Since, by the second century, most auxiliary forts were on the imperial frontiers, the auxiliary townships offered good prospects for trade beyond the empire. In their organization, these townships, called *vici*, resembled that of the *canabae*; they possessed their own magistrates, and assemblies. An extensive township surrounded Housesteads (Vercovi-cium)

on Hadrian's Wall in the third century AD (pl. 9.4); the community is attested passing its own decrees (*decreto vicanorum*). At Old Carlisle (Olerica) the *magistri vicanorum* dedicated an altar to Jupiter and Vulcan for the welfare of Gordian III with money collected from the inhabitants of the *vicus*; they would seem therefore to have had their own financial organization.

The auxiliary townships attracted both auxiliary and legionary veterans. Like the *canabae*, the *vici* housed the women, who had formed unofficial relationships with serving soldiers, as well as artisans and traders, some immigrants from other provinces, such as Barates from Palmyra whose profession was selling military standards; he settled in the *vicus* of Arbeia (South Shields) with his wife, Regina, of British or possibly Gallic origin. Despite the mixed social origin of these settlements, the civilian administration was firmly in the hands of the veterans and other Roman citizens; at Adony (Vetus Salina) it was the *veterani et cives Romani* who administered the affairs of the *vicus*; native *peregrini* were excluded, even though they must often have constituted the majority of inhabitants in the townships. Also like the *canabae*, *vici* were allowed to engage in building projects; in AD 100, the *cives Romani consistentes* outside the fort of Rusé (Sexaginta Prista), made arrangements for the repair of a public building, probably a bath-house.

There is reason to suspect that the *vici* could also prove useful to the military in the administration of the lands assigned to the supervision of auxiliary units. A civilian *quinquennalis* is attested as an official administering a territory which took its name from the auxiliary fort of Capidava (*territorium Capidavensis*). The auxiliary fort at Vejel (Micia) in Dacia possessed a substantial extramural township of *veterani et cives Romani* but was also the centre of a civilian territorial organization (*pagus Miciensis*). The clearest evidence that the territory assigned to an auxiliary garrison could be directly organized from the *vicus* comes from the fort of Szazhalombatta (Matrica) where the Roman citizens living in the township exercised control over the *territorium Matricensium*, which can hardly be other than the military district assigned to the auxiliary unit based at Matrica. A reasonable explanation for civilian involvement in the administration of military land, as suggested for the *canabae*, would be that it was the responsibility of the civilian organization to administer settlements on military land and to ensure that the garrison was supplied with such agricultural products which could be levied from the civilian community as a whole by direct taxation. Certainly, there is good evidence to show that the townships were not only communities of traders and

manufacturers. The terraces visible today, outside the fort of Vercovicium, were used as house-platforms but those on the periphery of the settlement were used for growing crops as early as the third century AD (pl. 9.4). At Rainau-Buch finds of agricultural implements and stores of spelt, emmer and lentils, suggest that some of the inhabitants of the townships were also here engaging in farming lands close to the fort.

Despite their interests in agriculture, the primary occupation of these townships was certainly commerce and industry. Waldürm *vicus* received substantial quantities of Spanish oil amphorae which must have been imported for local distribution or trade across the German frontier. At Micia, the auxiliary fort commanded an important trading route which followed the Mureş valley east to Apulum and west to the river Tisza, Sarmatian territory, and thence to the Danube. The settlement, which was quickly established during the second century, had its own port and substantial storebuildings and workshops. There were Moors from north-west Africa and Syrians from the eastern Mediterranean. The township was a centre for salt-working and it possessed its own association of stoneworkers whose products were no doubt shipped to the neighbouring city of Sarmizegetusa. Most *vici* had their metal-workers and carters. Chesterholm (Vindolanda) had craftsmen working with leather and bone and weaving was an important domestic industry. At Rainau-Buch there were workshops producing similar goods and potteries producing domestic wares although traders also came with fine bronze and pewter vessels to sell in the markets which must have been a regular feature of these townships, such as that evidenced for the auxiliary fort of Seligenstadt. Not all commercial enterprises were legal. The *vicus* of Vercovicium had at least one forger, producing counterfeit coins. The profits must have been good; the penalty for discovery was death. Although the inhabitants of the *vici* could hope for substantial profits, life was rough and could be dangerous. Again at Vercovicium, a building, probably used as a tavern, contained two skeletons, one of a man with the point of a sword still between his ribs, the other that of a woman; both had probably been murdered and their bodies secretly buried beneath the floor of the tavern's inner room.

The townships which grew up outside the auxiliary forts resembled in their buildings and their haphazard, irregular development, the larger legionary settlements. Saalburg was typical of many such *vici* which developed outside auxiliary forts during the second to third centuries AD (fig. 14.2). For 150 years, there was an auxiliary garrison there, just south of the Roman frontier. The civilian settlement spread west and east of the

fort but concentrated along the main road south; care was taken to prevent it developing too close to the fort's defences. Typically, there was an official posting station (*mansio*) for the use of travellers on imperial business. At Saalburg, the official importance of the *mansio* is emphasized by its position north of the *vicus* and within convenient reach of the bath-building situated close to the southern corner of the fort. At Vindolanda, the *mansio* was also built close to the baths although here separated from the fort by the *vicus*. Where possible the *mansio* was kept away from the civilian settlement. At Rainau-Buch, official visitors were no doubt thankful that both the bath-building and *mansio* were situated apart from the activities of traders and craftsmen; the official buildings were east of the fort whereas civilian housing was restricted to the open plateau to the south.

Relations between the townships and the military must always have been close although the conditions for the civilians, particularly during the first and early-second centuries AD, must have been spartan. Outside the auxiliary fort of Moers-Asberg (Asciburgium), a large township with timber shops and houses developed during the early-first century AD. Initially, security was a problem; the settlement was protected by its own enclosure which was levelled by the middle of the century to allow continued expansion over some 40 ha (100 acres). The inhabitants engaged in some industrial production of pottery and building tiles. However, with the departure of the garrison in

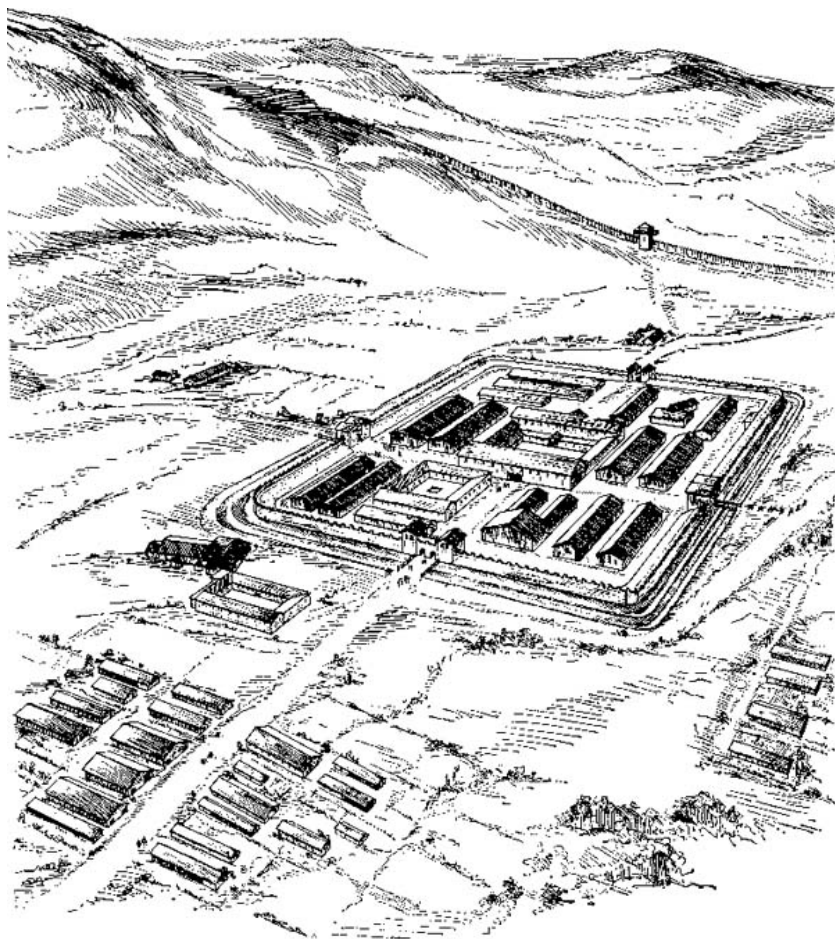


Figure 14.2 The Saalburg, Germany, fort and *vicus*, looking west towards the frontier (by kind permission of D. Baatz)

the Flavian period, the settlement lost its importance and no doubt its most enterprising traders and artisans, shrinking to the size and function of a small agricultural hamlet. Forts which were occupied during the second and third century AD allowed the development of prosperous communities and a more generous provision of amenities. After the military reforms of Septimius Severus allowed serving soldiers to marry, the *vici* rapidly expanded. At Rainau-Büch finds of military equipment from the *vicus* suggests that soldiers, by the middle of the third century, were allowed to cohabit with their wives outside the fort. Amenities were shared between fort and settlement. At Chesters (Cilurnum), the drains used by the garrison were shared by the extramural community. Both at Vindolanda and Rainau-

Buch civilians, including women, were permitted to use the military bath-building. In Britain, the restricted area between the ‘*vallum*’ a broad, flat-bottomed ditch, and Hadrian's wall was reserved during the second century for military use but by the third century AD civilian settlement was permitted to spread right up to the outer ditches of the fort defences (pl. 9.4). Although some of the *canabae* had already prospered and declined by the early-third century, their importance eclipsed by the foundation of cities close to the legionary fortresses, the *vici* on the frontiers of the Empire and those which had developed around the garrisons still maintained in the interior, were enjoying their greatest period of prosperity.

In the western provinces the term *vicus* (village) was usually applied to even the largest of settlements which lacked municipal authority. The term had a strict legal definition in that it was used of dependent communities which, despite limited, local autonomy, owed allegiance to a higher civilian authority, sometimes the tribe, often a neighbouring city (Festus ed. Lindsey 502 and 508; *Isid. Etym.* XV. 2, 1 if.; Van Buren, 1958, 2090–1). However, the definition of a settlement as a *vicus*, in the absence of literary or epigraphic evidence presents practical difficulties (Johnson, 1975, 175–9; Wightman, 1976, 59–64), particularly since the term *vicus* is also applied to townships, as noted above, tribal capitals, wards of cities and even complexes of buildings used for official tribal religious and political gatherings without, apparently, being centres of population (Picard, 1976, 47–9). Nevertheless, there existed villages which can be defined as possessing such a range of administrative and economic functions that, although their legal status may have remained that of a *vicus*, they are clearly important settlements which often merit the description of ‘small town’ even though the majority never acquired municipal authority (Todd, 1970, 114–17; Rivet, 1975, 111–14). This category of settlement, for which the Greek word generally used in the Eastern Empire was *komé*, occurred most often in those parts of the Empire where there was little or no official promotion of urbanism.

In Britain, the Balkans, northern Gaul, inland Asia Minor and above all, in Egypt, where cities were few and administered extensive territories, villages assumed particular importance and performed many of the functions elsewhere reserved for chartered settlements. Even within small provinces, there could be important regional differences. In Lower Moesia, the western half of the province retained its native settlements which rarely possessed civilian magistrates but were usually administered by locally appointed officials or chiefs (*principes vicanorum*). To the east, poor quality agricultural land failed to attract large settlements whereas, to the

north-east, there were numerous villages, mixed communities of Roman citizens and native immigrants from Thrace which possessed their own assemblies, passed decrees, elected *magistri* and *quaestores* and administered their own territories; these settlements were exceptional, particularly in the election of two magistrates, one of which was regularly a *peregrinus*, the other a Roman citizen; their developed and liberal administration may have resulted from imperial intervention and a planned colonization of a backward but strategically important part of the province (Poulter, 1980, 729–44). Elsewhere, there is also reason to suspect official encouragement behind the establishment of some villages. Not all townships established outside forts declined after the garrison's departure, as occurred at Asciburgium. In Gallia Belgica, prosperous roadside settlements occupied sites earlier used as military stores-bases (Mertens, 1983, 15 5–68). In southern Britain, many villages superseded abandoned military installations, perhaps originating as extramural settlements or as local market centres created by the military or civilian tribal administration after the departure of the garrison (Frere, 1975, 4–7). Other *vici* received no official encouragement. A number of important villages were established by Italian traders, such as the Republican settlement of Nauportus at the head of the Adriatic. Although a tribal centre, the Magdalensberg in Noricum developed as an important settlement containing large numbers of Italian traders and merchants during the late first century BC and remained an important commercial centre until the middle of the first century AD. However, in most villages, the native population constituted a majority and many of the communities themselves were already in existence before the Roman conquest. Braughing was an important late Iron Age settlement which continued to prosper during the Roman period, possibly after a short military presence. During the Roman period the village shifted its location slightly and concentrated along the Roman road which bypassed the centre of the pre-Roman settlement. Some villages, such as Baden (Aquae Helveticae) and Bath (Aquae Sulis), originated as native religious sites and derived considerable income from hot-water springs which permitted their development as spa-resorts; the sick came to take advantage of the healing properties of these springs, baths were provided for their use and temples constructed to the patron deity of the waters, to which thankful patients could make suitable recompense for successful cures. Important shrines became centres of pilgrimage and stimulated the development of settlements, catering for the needs of the visitors. Frilford, a sprawling settlement of c. 30 ha (74 acres), developed around an important temple. The Pachten *vicus Contiomagensium*, with some sixty to eighty houses,

could boast an important shrine and its own theatre for religious gatherings, no doubt paid for by devotees of the village deity, Pritona.

Although a few villages could depend upon their specialized functions as religious centres or spas, they usually developed as market and industrial centres. Markets provided for the exchange of locally grown agricultural produce but they also attracted traders bringing imported goods both for sale to the native population and to travellers passing through the settlement on official or private business. Industry was important although usually conducted on a small scale; the smelting of ore, bronze and iron-working, tile and coarse pottery production were common occupations. Occasionally, a village might be chosen for official industries; a centurion of *Legio III Augusta* in Africa, was dispatched to Gaul and to Brèves *vicus Briviae* to administer an imperial factory producing armour. Villages with harbour installations, on the coast or on a river, could become important trading centres; Nantes (Portus Namnetum) attracted sailors, probably merchant-traders, from northern Italy.

Mining settlements could also become important centres, accommodating the workers in the mines and a variety of traders and artisans offering services to the community. However, these settlements were regularly under direct imperial control, their affairs supervised in detail by a *procurator*. The mining settlement of Aljustrel (Vipasca), producing silver and copper, was supervised by such a *procurator*, controlling both the lessees (*conductores*) who purchased the mining rights and the traders and artisans who lived in Vipasca. There was a lessee for the baths, another for shoemaking, and one *conductor* was granted a monopoly for barbering. Any barber, other than the official lessee, found practising his trade in Vipasca or its territory, would be fined and have his razors confiscated but an exception was made for slaves attending to their master. Despite their lowly status and being subject to imperial control, some of the larger cosmopolitan mining villages, as in Moesia Superior during the late-second and early-third century AD, were granted full municipal autonomy (Mócsy, 1974, 131, 223–4).

Given the variety of types of villages, there was inevitably little conformity either in the number of their magistrates and officials or the extent of their responsibilities. Generally, villages possessed two *magistri*, like the auxiliary townships. Within the larger territories assigned to cities, villages could acquire a variety of local officials. Although responsible to the city of Vienne (Vienna), Lausanne (Lousonna) had a single executive magistrate (*curator vicanorum*), and an aedile, no doubt to supervise the village market. At Aix-les-Bains (Aquae), there was a council of elders

(*decemlecti*) and two magistrates, here styled *patroni* not *magistri*. Usually, the villages, even those permitted to exercise direct control over their own affairs, were responsible to a higher authority, usually a city. Occasionally, there was an intermediate administration; the *vicus Budalia* was subject to the officials of the district (*pagus Martius*) which in turn was controlled by the *colonia* of Mitrovica (Sirmium). Cities imposed taxes and other duties upon villages within their territories and could be expected to take a more than passing interest in village affairs; a series of inscriptions erected by *Iiviri* (*duoviri*) from Salzburg (Iuvavum) in the *vicus* of Seebruck (Bedaium) were probably set up during regular inspections by the city's magistrates.

Patrons, particularly wealthy and influential patrons, were a useful asset and worth cultivating. Villages had only limited financial resources; public buildings could be paid for by public subscription but villages were thankful for demonstrations of kindness from wealthy people. Individual generosity allowed for the construction and decoration of a temple for the *vicus* of Aoste (Augusta) and no doubt the legacy left by a certain Tiberius Iulius Quadratus for the *vicani* of Susa (Segusa) was put to good use. A patron who was also a member of the urban aristocracy could be particularly useful and result in the occasional windfall; the villagers of Moudon (Minnodunum) received money for a *gymnasium*, a gift from a *sevir Augustalis* of Avenches (Aventicum), for which they enthusiastically passed a decree providing land for its erection. But even if money was available, the city could still withhold planning permission; the villagers of Frascati (Angusculanum) cautiously obtained permission from Tusculum, the city to which the *vicus* belonged, before repairing a village shrine. Obtaining the good-will of neighbouring land-owners was always good policy. The villagers of Yverdon (Eburodunum) dedicated an inscription in honour of Iulia Festilla, their neighbour, as a token of thanks for her good services. The smaller villages could even be owned by wealthy individuals; Čerević (*vicus Iosista*), in the territory of Sirmium, was one such community on the estates of a large land-owner. In Africa, estates were often so large that they contained numerous villages. The *vicus Annaeus*, probably on the estate of Q. Geminius Annaeus, faithfully erected two statues in the settlement after the land-owner's death and in accordance with the terms of his will; since the villagers complied with Annaeus' wishes, relations between the village and the wealthy Roman citizen were presumably cordial. The relations between land-owner and villagers were not always to each party's satisfaction. When a boundary dispute arose between Sariurt (*vicus Buteridavensis*) and the neighbouring landowner,

Messia Pudentilla, the dispute had to be settled by the governor who sent the fleet-commander to erect boundary stones between the village lands and those of the private estate.

Villages could be required to perform a number of official functions. They might be obliged to provide accommodation for local policemen, often soldiers seconded from the governor's secretariat (*beneficarii consulares*) or centurions from the legions who were detailed to administer a rural district (*centuriones regionarii*). The larger roadside settlements were responsible for the provision of rest-houses and for providing supplies for the use of the imperial posting service (*cursus publicus*). Guest-houses, used by officials of the imperial administration on business (*mansiones*), like those outside the auxiliary forts and legionary fortresses, offered overnight accommodation and often a change of horses or mules. At Godmanchester (Durovigutum), a central courtyard was surrounded by separate bedrooms, storerooms, a kitchen and dining accommodation; both the unusually lavish amenities and its proximity to another important facility for travellers, the bath-house, recommends an interpretation as a *mansio*. Beside the building, there were stables to house the horses and mules used by travellers. The provision and maintenance of these buildings, particularly when coupled with additional responsibilities could prove a strain on a village's resources.

Villages usually developed on or close to main roads, often at important road-junctions or river-crossings. The larger villages covered an extensive area of as much as 50 ha (124 acres) with rarely any sign of planning in the layout of streets or buildings. At Water Newton (Durobrivae), the central part of the straggling settlement extended along Ermine Street, which passed through the settlement and it was this nucleus which

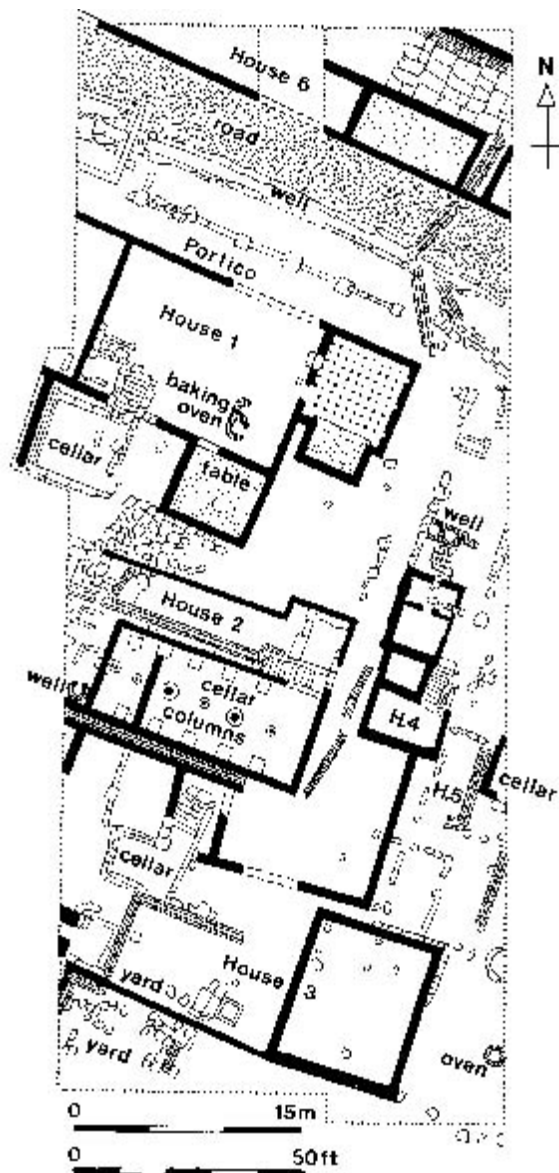


Figure 14.3 Plan of Houses 1-6, Schwarzenaker, G. D. Luxemburg (after Kolling)

was provided with its own fortifications, enclosing 18 ha (45 acres), by the fourth century AD (pl. 14.1). Even within this restricted area, most of the buildings would seem to have been concentrated along the main road and the adjoining sideroads which branched off, more or less at right-angles, from Ermine Street. Away from the main road, subsidiary tracks and streets

meander across the site. One public building, perhaps a market or *mansio*, is visible on the aerial photographs, set back from the centre of the village (pl. 14.2). At Vervoz-Clavier, shops and taverns lined the main street and the village boasted a few public buildings: a market, a shrine and a basilical building, possibly used for village assemblies and providing offices for the *magistri vici*. There was certainly an assembly hall (*auditorium*) for Sinoe (*vicus Quintionis*) and Durovigutum possessed an aisled building which may well have performed a similar function. Occasionally, as at Dorchester and Kenchester in Britain and at Tournai in Gallia Belgica, the wealthier villagers could provide for themselves houses built of stone, even equipped with mosaics but, more usually, houses were constructed of timber or mudbrick with a simple stone foundation.

Typical of the more prosperous villages of eastern Gaul was the *vicus* of



Figure 14.4 Reconstruction of a street with portico, Schwarzenaker, G. D. Luxemburg (after Kolling)

Schwarzenacker an der Blies. The settlement was located close to an important road-junction although its prosperity derived largely from its function as a market centre for its rich agricultural hinterland. During the first century AD, buildings were of timber but by the early third, they had been replaced by sturdy, stone built houses (pl. 14.3 and fig. 14.3). ‘House 1’ was a shop with living rooms for the owner provided around an interior courtyard which was used as a domestic bakery. The proprietor made enough of a profit from his trade to afford the construction of a hypocaust system to heat his living room and a large cellar to store his goods. The shop was fronted by a portico which gave the premises a tolerably distinguished appearance (fig. 14.4). Opposite the shop, there was a small inn on the street-corner and the road was paved, with its own drain flushed by the village aqueduct. The primary industrial occupations would seem to have been iron-working and pottery manufacture.

The wealthiest villages and townships were able to acquire a variety of additional amenities. The *vicus* of Brough-on-Humber (Petuaria) had a theatre and so did the *vicus* of Bitburg (Bida), the money for which was provided by L. Ammianus Gambvion who also charged the *curatores vici* with its maintenance and the provision of entertainment every year on 30 April. Both Lousonna and Geneva (Genua) had aqueducts; Pallien (*vicus Voclanmorum*) had more mundane facilities, including a communal kitchen. More surprisingly, villages and townships could have their own public clocks, sundials or in less clement parts of the Empire, water-clocks. C. Blaesus Gratus generously gave the villagers of Annecy (Boutae) a new timepiece and a building furnished with decorative adornments to contain it. He also thoughtfully provided additional money to pay a slave to maintain the clock. But villages were rarely allowed fortifications before the third century. Only in Britain were many permitted to erect their own fortifications of earth and timber; possibly because they wished to emulate the dignified appearance of the cities (Hartley, 1983, 84–95; see also Frere, 1984, 23), or, more probably, because defensive measures were necessary during a period of crisis in Britain, towards the end of the second century AD (Wacher, 1975b, 51–2).

In the eastern provinces, village life already possessed its own traditional institutions before the Roman conquest; although some villages increased their administrative authority or developed new institutions, the village (*komæ*) generally remained unaffected by Roman practice and maintained its character as it had evolved during the hellenistic period; traditional magistracies were still used and Greek remained the language of its administration. There were concessions to Roman practice. The *cursus publicus* was extended to the eastern Empire and impositions were placed upon the *komæ* as they were on the *vicus*. However, in the east, there was already a tradition of providing facilities for a public posting service; a similar system had been operated by the Persians and later, by the hellenistic kings. During the reign of Tiberius, Augustus' instructions concerning the provision of food and lodging for official travellers were implemented in the territory of the town of Sagalassus in Psidia. The system catered for the requisitioning of mules and donkeys by travelling officials, to take them to the next posting station, although payment to the villagers was made for their use (Mitchell, 1976, 106–31). As in the west, the villagers sometimes found their duties excessive, and even unfair.

Wherever few towns had been established during the hellenistic and Roman periods, villages could largely look after their own affairs, untroubled by interference from city magistrates. In Asia Minor, the

village, often described simply as the 'settlement' (*katoikia*) usually had two magistrates called *komarchs*, an assembly of elders (*gerousia*), a village scribe (*grammateus*) and an officer in charge of the village market (*agoranomos*). Communal land could be administered by the officers of the village and funds, partly raised from contributions, partly from fines imposed by the magistrates, were used for public building projects. In central Caria, villages not only maintained their own administrative officials but also imitated the cities by uniting into religious leagues (*koina*) which even acquired a political role, electing magistrates and granting local rights of citizenship (Magie, 1950, 1024–31). In the frontier districts of Trachonitis and Auranitis in eastern Syria, villages were supervised by centurions detached from service with the legions although the communities were still allowed to evolve their own forms of local administration; whereas, during the first and second centuries AD, most villages were controlled by a single headman (*strategos*), by the third century AD, many of the larger communities possessed annually elected magistrates and village assemblies, empowered to pass decrees authorizing the construction of public baths, basilicas and *mansiones* (Jones, 1971, 284–5; Harper, 1928, 117–21). Village officials acquired a variety of different titles as each community provided for its own needs; *pistoi*, *pronoetai* and *epimeletai* all seem to have been involved in aspects of public administration and the provision of buildings for use by the villagers (Harper, 1928, 122).

Roman Egypt preserved the system of Ptolemaic administration largely intact within which it was the village, and not the city, which was the usual instrument of local administration. Papyri fortunately provide detailed information about the organization of the Egyptian villages. Each had its own council of elders (*presbuteroi*), often a local policeman (*phylacos*) and a village scribe (*komogrammateus*) although imperial control was more strictly enforced than in other provinces; appointments to office were made, or at least approved, by the local representative of the provincial administration, the *epistrategos* or *strategos* (Abbott and Johnson, 1926, 27–8). The *komogrammateus* was a particularly important functionary; he drew up the official tax-returns and accounts of the village which had then to be forwarded to the Roman authorities. Petaus, son of Petaus, from Karanis in the Fayum, held the important post of village scribe for three years, serving no less than five villages in the vicinity of his home. He submitted accounts, lists of goods and office-holders to the local *strategos*. Petaus was fearful lest he should make any mistakes with his documentation and was at pains to ensure his duties were carried out

correctly. However, Petaus, the *komogrammateus*, had one failing which made his job particularly difficult; he could neither read nor write. By carefully practising his signature and persuading his literate brother, Theon, to check the documents prepared for him by his clerks, Petaus succeeded in keeping his guilty secret from the *strategos* whose anger he clearly feared, should his incompetence ever be discovered (Youtie, 1966, 127–43). Yet the papyri recovered from Egyptian villages demonstrate that Petaus' case was exceptional. Not only were many villagers quite able to read and write Greek, at least some of the more educated had a taste for classical literature. Letters also reveal both the high standards of literacy common in villages and provide information about the lives of ordinary villagers.

Karanis, the home of Petaus, was typical of villages in Roman Egypt. Unlike the sprawling villages common in the western provinces, the four to six thousand inhabitants of Karanis lived in comparatively cramped surroundings. Houses were constructed from sun-dried bricks and timber was used sparingly for doors, window-frames and roofs. Although houses regularly had one or two upper storeys, the available accommodation was often subdivided for separate families and personal privacy must have been minimal. Buildings were closely packed, often separated by only narrow alleyways, affording some protection from the sun's rays. Cooking, washing and the preparation of food had all to be done in the small courtyards behind the houses where domestic animals were also kept (fig. 14.5). Overcrowding, the hot climate of Egypt and the rudimentary arrangements for sanitation assisted the rapid transmission of disease; the temporary abandonment of outlying parts of the village in the later second century AD probably followed a serious outbreak of plague and the death of many of Karanis' occupants. However, the villagers' diet was remarkably varied; in addition to plentiful supplies of grain and vegetables, fish, chickens and other domestic animals, doves, a regular feature of many houses in the village, provided additional reserves of fresh meat. Karanis maintained a detachment of soldiers housed in two-storeyed barracks, placed, for security, close to the state granary where supplies were kept before shipment down



Figure 14.5 Plan of the eastern quarter of the village at Karanis, Egypt: scale 1:1900 (after Husselman)

the Nile to Alexandria. The granary itself, although built almost entirely from mud brick, was three storeys in height and contained vaulted storerooms with bins to keep the grain dry (fig. 14.6). Though by no means a wealthy community, the villagers of Karanis enjoyed most of the basic amenities and facilities found in Roman villages even though in language, economy and administration Karanis had little in common with contemporary villages in the western provinces of the Empire.

The third-century barbarian invasions proved catastrophic for the open, undefended villages and townships of the western provinces. With the collapse of the German frontier and the withdrawal to the Rhine, the townships of the 'outer limes' were either destroyed by the enemy or abandoned. At Rainau-Buch, the civilians hastily fled from their settlement c. AD 260, leaving hoards of metalwork and equipment in the vain hope that they would later be able to retrieve their belongings. At Mogontiacum, part of the **canabae** was protected by a wall on the south-east side of the fortress and the principal part of the settlement, north of the fortress, was provided with a larger circuit of defences and finally granted municipal status towards the end of the third century. Most communities were less fortunate. The **canabae** at Carnuntum, which had continued to prosper in the early years of the third century, was largely abandoned by the fourth.

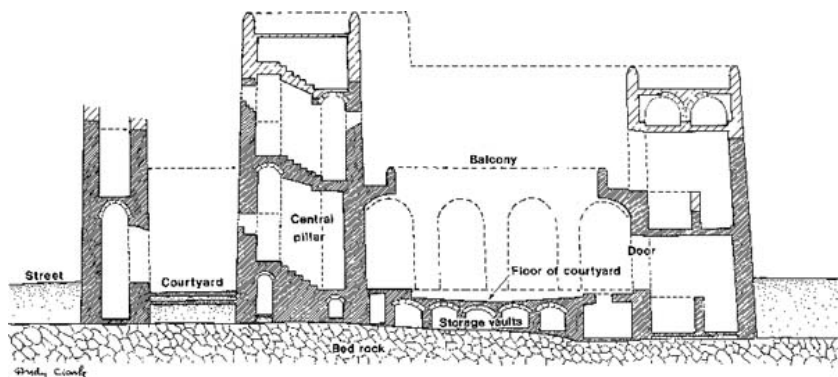


Figure 14.6 Elevation of the state granary, Karanis, Egypt (after Husselman)

In the interior, the small road-side villages were particularly exposed to barbarian raids. Some, like Schwarzenacker were abandoned; others, like Ernodunum, although no longer as prosperous as they had been during the peaceful years of the second century, survived as late as the fifth century AD. The most important of the villages, like Liberch-ies in Gallia Belgica, were provided with small fortlets which offered some protection for the residual civilian population. Sporadic, locally organized resistance in the form of **ad hoc** militias helped during particular moments of crisis (MacMullen, 1963, 137–8). A common expedient during the third and particularly the late fourth century was to construct hill-top refuges, fortifications to which the village community could retire when danger threatened. The inhabitants of Chameleux and Arlon in Gallia Belgica built fortifications for their own defence (Mertens, 1980, 423–70). On the Lower Danube, similar fortifications were constructed on steep-sided hills or overlooking precipitous river cliffs and were provided with watch-towers and enclosures to protect stock as well as the villagers who continued to live in the open settlements, though within easy reach of their strongholds (Poulter, 1983, 97–100). Britain, exceptionally, was not directly affected by the collapse of the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Braughing and Ancaster prospered in the fourth century; Water Newton and Godmanchester may even have acquired urban status.

The eastern provinces were also largely unaffected by the barbarian invasions of the third century. The village of Orcistus in Phrygia had prospered and was able to petition the emperor Constantine for a municipal charter; the request was granted, partly because of its large population and good water-supply but also because, as was duly noted, it was a useful place, being a road-junction, to support an official posting station of the **cursus publicus**. The villages of eastern Syria continued to erect their

public buildings in the fourth century and preserve their local autonomy. The village of Behyo is typical

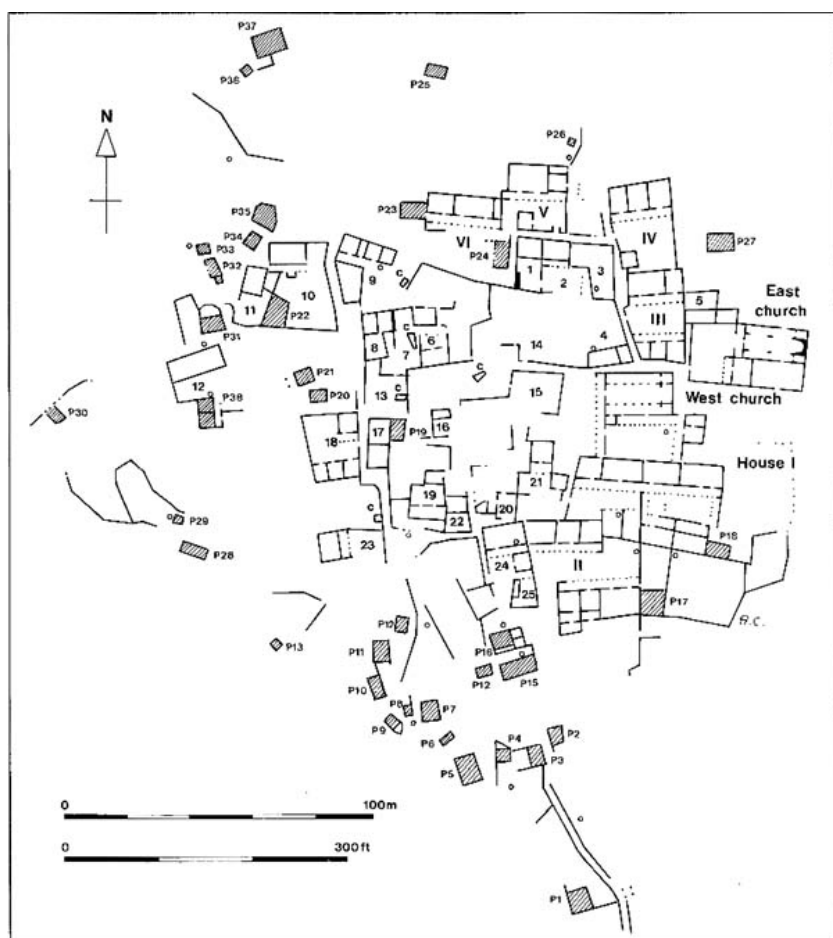


Figure 14.7 Plan of Behyo, Syria. I-VI, large houses; 1–25, farms and houses; P1–P38, oil presses; OC, wells (*after Tchalenka*)

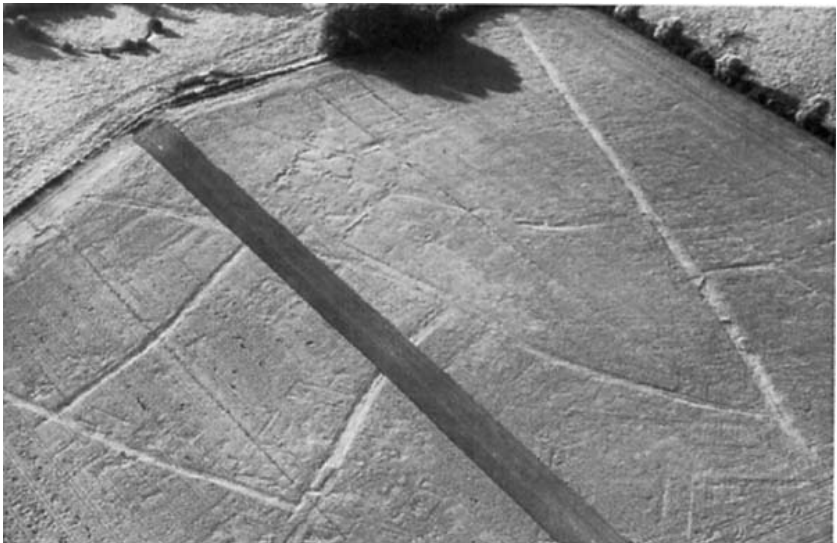
of the villages of the region (fig. 14.7). The centre of the village in the fourth to fifth centuries AD was the ‘West Church’ and the house of a wealthy land-owner (house 1). The poorer artisans and farmers occupied small houses in the western part of the settlement. The economy of the village relied on the production of olive-oil and presses for processing olives were built both within the village and on the edge of the settlement, close to the olive-groves. The community prospered during the fifth century and expanded: new, medium-sized houses were built (houses 2–6),

suggesting that, by the late fifth and sixth centuries, at least some of the villagers were deriving a modest income from trading oil with neighbouring villages and more distant cities; they also invested some of their profits in the construction of a second church (the 'East Church'). The economic development of Behyo in the late Roman period was typical of the villages in eastern Syria but there were new problems which were afflicting villages elsewhere in the Near East. The growth of landed estates which absorbed large numbers of villages was coupled with the spread of patronage, exercised by wealthy land-owners and soldiers who took control of villages, and denied the central government their taxes and those due to the cities, while taking the village revenues for their own use. The problem was of increasing concern to the imperial government during the fourth century, a sure indication that its development could not be arrested (Jones, 1964, 773–88; Liebeschuetz, 1972, 201–3). Some villages suffered a noticeable decline during the late Empire; in Karanis, 618 land-owners lived in the village during the late second century but there were only 140 in the early fourth century and the village was totally abandoned by the middle of the fifth; failure to maintain the irrigation channels, vital to the agricultural system, may well explain the collapse of village-life in the Fayum. However, elsewhere in Egypt, villages maintained their own local administration and would seem to have survived as late as the sixth century AD (Johnson and West, 1967, 98–9). A general picture is difficult to reconstruct although it would seem that, despite serious economic and social problems, villages in the eastern provinces continued to play an important role in the life of the late Roman Empire.

The economic and political development of villages throughout the Roman provinces was undoubtedly one of the successes of the early Empire which allowed diverse communities to establish their own, if limited, administration and even to aspire, in some cases successfully, to self-government, with the acquisition of municipal status. The disruption of rural life in the western provinces, closely reflected in the fate of many villages, may have contributed to the eventual collapse of the Roman Empire in the west whereas the villages in the east, though never to recover the prosperity of the early Empire, continued to provide the resources of manpower and money which certainly played a vital part in the survival of the eastern provinces and the Empire of Byzantium.



14.1 Aerial view of Water Newton (Durobrivae, Britain), showing the walled settlement and internal streets, with an extramural cemetery along the road to Ircchester towards the bottom



14.2 Aerial view of part of the interior of Water Newton, showing the irregular pattern of streets and a large building at bottom right



14.3 [Schwarzenaker from the air](#) showing houses 1–6 (centre left) and a neighbouring *insula* (centre right); the tavern is visible at top right

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PART 6

· GOVERNMENT · AND · LAW ·

• GOVERNMENT • AND • THE • • PROVINCES •

Graham Burton

Introduction

The Roman Empire stretched a thousand miles from southern Scotland to the deserts of southern Egypt. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the administrative mechanisms which served to maintain the political unity of this vast territorial expanse. The Roman government did not pursue many of the goals which, today, are conventionally associated with the exercise of political power by the state, e.g. the control or modification of economic developments, social welfare, education. Its concerns were more limited, above all the regular exaction of taxes and the maintenance of internal order. In the period from the first emperor, Augustus, up to the political and military crisis of the mid-third century, the most striking feature of Roman rule is the stability and persistence of the administrative tasks carried out by the imperial state and of the institutional mechanisms created to achieve them. For that reason this essay concentrates on *typical* practices and relationships, and eschews tangential discussion of minor variations of practice across time or by region; the governance of the province of Egypt stands as an exception to much of what is said in this chapter. To begin, the personnel of Roman government in the provinces and the internal administrative organization of the provinces are described briefly, before proceeding to examine the three main manifestations of Roman rule, taxation, jurisdiction and the supervision of the local administrative units (the cities; [Part 5](#)) of the provinces.

Governors and governed

The Roman Empire was divided for administrative purposes into a set of territorial circumscriptions called provinces. Each province was set under the authority of a Roman governor. Although the number of provinces increased during the principate, especially in the first century through imperial expansion and occasionally through the division of a single geographically large area into two, provinces remained the basic unit for all administration throughout this period. Governors of provinces were selected from the ranks of the most prestigious status-groups in the social structure of the empire, namely the senatorial and equestrian orders; most were senators. In AD 138, for example, thirty-two provinces were governed by senators; at that time, besides a small congeries of minor provinces, such as the Cottian Alps or Corsica, only five substantial areas, Egypt, Noricum, Raetia and the two Mauretaniae, were governed by equestrians. Governors of senatorial rank were split, in terms of formal public law, into two categories, imperial legates and proconsuls. For example, in AD 138, twenty-two provinces were governed by imperial legates, ten by proconsuls. The only significant practical distinctions between the two categories resided in their method of appointment and their tenure of office. Imperial legates were appointed on the authority of the emperor. No fixed term of office was ever introduced, but from the late first century onwards their normal tenure was about three years. Proconsuls were selected for office by lot from the ranks of senators of appropriate seniority; their tenure was fixed by law at one year. Within each category certain posts were considered more responsible and senior than others. For example imperial legates of militarily important provinces where more than one legion was stationed (e.g. Syria or Britain) were appointed only from the ranks of senators who had held the highest civil magistracy at Rome, the consulship. In the Republic the consulship had been the highest and most powerful political office available in the state. In the principate, although shorn of most of its practical powers, it remained an important and prestigious marker in a senator's career; normally held at age about forty it gave access to the most important administrative and military posts in the empire. Similarly the proconsuls of Africa and Asia, economically prosperous and highly urbanized provinces, were always ex-consuls; the remaining proconsuls were normally more junior senators in their mid-thirties. However despite differences in title, method of appointment, length of tenure, and seniority, *all* governors of senatorial rank exercised similar powers and responsibilities over their provincial subjects. The appointment

and titulature of equestrian governors was a more straightforward matter. They were all appointed by the emperor and normally carried the title of procurator with the exception of the governor of Egypt who was styled prefect; when Mesopotamia was annexed as a province in 195 it also received an equestrian governor who was styled prefect. Their length of tenure was not legally fixed, but probably averaged three years.

No large-scale corps of lower-status professional administrators linked governors to their provincial subjects. Rather governors were assisted by a small, mainly nonprofessional, staff who were recruited from four sources. First, in the majority of provinces, a small number of junior senators, varying according to the status and importance of the province, assisted the governor. The proconsul of Asia, for example, was assisted by three more junior senators (technically termed legates), to whom he delegated some administrative and judicial functions, and by a quaestor (the most junior rank in the senate) who had primarily financial functions. In contrast, in a number (in 138, eleven, such as Arabia or Thrace) of provinces, the governor had no senatorial assistants. Second, provincial governors, like all senatorial magistrates, were accompanied by a small group of attendants, known as *apparitores*, who acted as lictors, messengers, heralds or scribes. Third, every governor, before he set out for his province, would assemble on his own initiative a body of friends (*amici*) and advisers who served him during his tour of duty. For example, an eminent senator and sometime tutor to the future emperor Marcus Aurelius, Cornelius Fronto, reported that, as part of his preparations for becoming governor of Asia, he had:

taken active steps to enlist the help of my friends in all that concerned the ordering of the province. Relations and friends of mine, of whose loyalty and integrity I was assured, I called from home to assist me. I wrote to my intimates at Alexandria to repair with all speed to Athens and await me there, and I deputed the management of my Greek correspondence to those most learned men. From Cilicia too I called upon eminent citizens to join me, for owing to my continual advocacy of the public and private interests of Cilicians before you, I had hosts of friends in that province. From Mauretania also I summoned to my side Julius Senex ... in order to make use not only of his loyalty and diligence, but also of his military activity in the hunting down and suppressing of bandits.

Finally, every governor had a detachment of regular soldiers, seconded from their normal military duties, attached to his personal service. They

acted as his military bodyguard and performed certain executive functions such as executing condemned criminals and helping to hunt down fugitives. Together these four groups formed a mini-court to the governor and many of them would accompany him on his tour of his province. From their ranks, especially the *amici*, he would choose advisers who assisted him in his formal hearings of judicial and administrative disputes (p. 431 below).

Alongside the provincial governor stood a formally distinct set of elite officials called procurators who were normally recruited from the equestrian order and performed a variety of fiscal functions. In modern works such procurators are conventionally designated as ‘fiscal procurators’ to differentiate them from the small set of equestrian officials who *governed* provinces and were also called procurators (praesidial procurators; p. 424 above). In every province ruled by a senatorial governor the emperor appointed an equestrian procurator who exercised overall supervision over imperial estates and property and controlled, with the governor, the allocation and collection of the direct tax, the tribute. These fiscal procurators, also, sometimes supervised the collection of indirect taxes, although, according to a variable administrative practice, specially designated procurators were often put in charge of the collection of indirect taxes for individual provinces or groups of provinces (p. 428 below).

Given the small number of elite officials regularly sent out to the provinces and the parallel absence of a large-scale bureaucratic apparatus, the imperial state needed an intermediary institutional mechanism whereby its authority over the provincial population could be effected. This mechanism was provided by the cities of the Empire. Each province can be viewed, for present purposes, as a congeries of civic units. Each city had a territorial hinterland, its *territorium*, attached to it. Each, despite variations of title and status, possessed a common form of political organization: boards of executive magistrates and permanent deliberative councils, recruited largely from exmagistrates. The magistrates and councils exercised routine *local* administrative and political control over their territories (p. 434 below). In addition the imperial state devolved on these local civic authorities much of the routine administrative work of collecting taxes and facilitating jurisdiction. As will be seen in more detail, in the Roman Empire the processes of taxation, jurisdiction and administration were dependent on the regular co-operation of the elite representatives (governors and procurators) of the imperial state on the one hand and of the local civic authorities on the other.

Three aspects of this brief description deserve emphasis. First, governors and procurators who possessed supreme decision-making and

administrative powers in the provinces were not professional administrators. As members of the socio-political élite of the empire provincial administration formed only a part of their wider social and political role. Second, the number of elite administrators was small in comparison to the size of the Empire. In the mid-second century there were only about one hundred and fifty such administrators in the provinces to govern a population conventionally estimated at 50 to 60 million people, that is one elite administrator for about every 350,000 to 400,000 inhabitants. By comparison in southern China, in the twelfth century, with a population of a similar size, there was roughly one elite administrator for every 15,000 people. Third, the routine co-operation of the local ruling class of the provinces, the civic magistrates and councillors, was crucial to the administrative stability of the Empire.

Taxation: the material demands of the state

Roman taxation and jurisdiction were the twin symbols of Roman domination and provincial subjection. Taxation in money and kind enabled the imperial state to maintain a large standing army, to provide an elaborate network of roads for military and political communication, to pay administrators, to help feed the massive population of the Imperial City, and to underpin conspicuous consumption at the imperial court. In terms of revenue the most important tax was the tribute, which took two forms, a tax levied on land and property (*tributum soli*) and a poll-tax (*tributum capitis*). The land and population of all the provinces were subject to tribute. The only significant exceptions occurred when specific communities were granted the Italian right which exempted their territory from the imposition of tribute.

The process of levying the tribute involved three distinct stages: the census, the assessment, and collection. The census acted as the backbone of the Roman tax-system by providing the information on which assessment and collection were based. The annexation of any new territory by the imperial state (e.g. Cappadocia under Tiberius or Arabia under Trajan) was followed immediately by the taking of a census. Otherwise censuses of individual provinces or groups of provinces occurred on a regular periodic basis. Responsibility for supervising the census lay either with the provincial governor or with officials of senatorial or equestrian rank who had been especially designated for the task by the emperor. The practical

work of collecting information, however, devolved on the local civic magistrates. They registered the inhabitants of their city and its territory (for the purpose of the poll-tax) and collected individual returns from owners of property in their territory for the land tax. Ownership of land had to be reported in the following manner:

Name of each farm, in what city it is and in what district, and the two nearest neighbours; arable, how many *iugera*, which have been sown in the last ten years; vineyards, how many vines; olive yards, how many *iugera* and how many trees; meadows, how many *iugera*, which were mown in the last ten years; pasture, how many *iugera* approximately; also woods. The person who makes the declaration must estimate everything. ... A man who has land in another city must make a declaration in the city in which the land is, since the tribute for land must be raised in that in whose territory it is occupied. (Ulpian, *on the Census*, Book III)

Once people and property had been enumerated and registered, assessment of liabilities ensued. Assessment, at least for the land-tax, was not imposed on individuals but on communities and their territories. The process of collecting the taxes devolved, again, on the local authorities. They, not imperial officials, were responsible for the physical exaction of tribute. Individual provincials were liable to their city, the city to the imperial government. The principle of communal liability explains the need for largescale land-owners to declare in their returns separately, city by city, the location of their property, as well as the Roman government's practice of granting communal remissions of liability to cities on occasions of natural disasters or special need. Within this process of census-taking, assessment and exaction, the role of the governors and provincial procurators was supervisory and adjudicatory. They tried to ensure that each city paid its due assessment, held legal hearings when individuals were accused of providing false information for the census, and adjudicated disputes between cities, especially neighbouring ones, which arose out of the collection of tribute.

Three major indirect taxes were regularly levied in the provinces, the tax on manumissions, the inheritance tax, and a toll on goods in transit known as the *portorium*. The manumissions tax was paid by slaves on the sums they paid to their masters for their freedom. The inheritance tax was levied on the property of Roman citizens alone. This tax had been instituted by the first emperor, Augustus, to fund the special military treasury which

disbursed the retirement bounties to veteran soldiers. Both these taxes were levied at a rate of 5 per cent. The toll on goods which passed across various territorial circumscriptions of the empire, not necessarily coincident with individual provinces, was levied at rates of 2 to 2½ per cent on the value of the goods, rates which varied in different parts of the Empire. Although the full details of how these taxes were administered remain obscure, the general outline is reasonably clear. Procurators (p. 425 above), either the fiscal procurator of a province, or procurators specially appointed to the tax, assumed overall responsibility for supervising the taxes and adjudicating disputes. The process of collection was either farmed out to groups of private taxcontractors or placed in the hands of imperial slaves and freedmen. Administrative practice in this last matter appears to have varied from period to period and from area to area. One striking feature of these administrative arrangements deserves emphasis. Of all the forms of contact between the imperial state and the subject population these indirect taxes alone were not handled by the cities and the civic authorities as intermediaries. Consequently they represent a rare case where the agents of the imperial state, whether directly in guise of imperial slaves and freedmen or indirectly in the guise of tax-farmers, came routinely into direct contact with the subjects of the Empire.

Money taxes do not exhaust the catalogue of regular material demands which the imperial state made on its subjects. At any time a major military expedition or the peripatetic movements of the imperial court could make extraordinary demands, in the form of forced requisitioning, on provincials. Provincials were also routinely subject to three closely interlinked sets of material imposts (in the form either of provisions or transport or labour), namely labour and money for the maintenance of roads, *hospitium*, and the *vehiculatio*. *Hospitium* was the obligation of provincial subjects to provide shelter and hospitality, without payment, to governors and their staff and to soldiers passing through a province on official military service. *Vehiculatio* was a system whereby designated agents of the imperial state, such as governors, procurators, or imperial slaves and freedmen, or soldiers on official business, were entitled to requisition, at fixed prices, transport and supplies for their journeys. The organization of the levying of resources for the *vehiculatio* was similar to that for the collection of tribute. The local civic authorities were responsible within the territory of their own city for the maintenance of supplies and the provision of transport which they levied from the land-owners and peasants of their territory. Provincial governors and fiscal procurators laid down, and tried to enforce, rules governing access to these services, and also adjudicated disputes. Communi

ties which were situated on or close to major highways tended to suffer most from the various claims for food, lodging and transport made by passing soldiers and officials. Throughout this period peasant communities and villages are attested petitioning governors to seek protection from the depredations caused by the excessive and abusive claims of soldiers and officials. Although we cannot quantify in monetary terms the amount of surplus extracted by the Roman government through these material imposts, there is no doubt that the inhabitants of the Empire perceived their exaction as one of the most onerous burdens imposed on them by the imperial state.

As long as political and military stability persisted in the Empire, the system of taxation, which we have described, offered clear advantage both to the Roman government and to the local elites of the provinces. The collection of the bulk of taxes in money (through the tribute and the indirect taxes) facilitated the transfer by the Roman government of resources from one end of the Empire to the other. Prosperous provinces where government expenditure was low (such as Asia) provided the revenues to fund expenditure in provinces which were economically poorer or where substantial military forces were permanently stationed. The use of the census to assess and reassess periodically the wealth of the empire helped to provide a rational and predictable framework for collecting revenue and for correlating it with expenditure. The system was also cost-effective to the Roman government since it had no need to maintain a permanent and substantial corps of official tax-collectors. The local elites who actually effected the collection of taxes also gained advantages. Their administrative and political authority, as local magistrates and councillors, was enhanced by their role as tax-collectors of the imperial state. Financially they acquired the opportunity of manipulating the allocation of taxes in their own locality to their own advantage, in their role as substantial landowners, by imposing a disproportionate share of the tax-assessment on the dependent peasantry or other politically subordinate groups.

The military crisis of the third century, however, and the associated need of the Roman government for increased financial resources severely strained the existing fiscal system. The traditional reliance on periodic censuses and on the administrative cooperation of the local elites made it administratively and politically difficult either to increase the general level of taxation or to raise money quickly when sudden crises supervened. The government, therefore, resorted to repeated debasements of the coinage ([Part 8, Chapter 21](#)). Debasement interacted with a more generalized

economic crisis to produce inflation. In a vicious circle monetary inflation and economic crisis combined with political instability to undermine the unitary fiscal system based on money taxes. Increasing resort was had to exactions in kind to supply and reward the armies. When, by the end of the third century, unitary political control was restored over the Empire, taxation in kind was institutionalized as the keystone of the fiscal system which now operated within a radically altered framework of provincial organization and administration ([Part 6, Chapter 17](#)).

Jurisdiction: the maintenance of the social order

The Roman imperial state arrogated to itself the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. In the provinces only the governor possessed the right to impose capital sentences. According to one contemporary commentator it was the duty:

of a good and conscientious governor to see that the province he rules is peaceful and tranquil, and this result he will achieve without difficulty if he takes careful measures to ensure that the province is free from criminals and searches them out. He should search out persons guilty of sacrilege, brigands, kidnappers and thieves and punish them according to their offences; he should also repress those who harbour them, without whom a brigand cannot long be concealed. (Ulpian, 'On the Duties of a Proconsul', Bk. 7, *Digest*, 1.18.13.pr.)

Two key practices, the assize tour and the co-operation of the local authorities, shaped the way in which governors attempted to suppress crime.

First, the assize tour. No standing courts existed in the provinces. Instead governors annually toured their provinces and conducted judicial hearings at specifically designated cities, known as assize-centres. The status of assize-centre became a highly-prized privilege. Economic advantages accrued to such cities because of the influx of officials, litigants, and hangers-on, while their inhabitants gained the practical advantage of relatively easy access to the governor's tribunal.

Second, the role of the local authorities. Given the lack of a substantial executive force at the disposal of the governor, the local system of rule exercised the routine functions of apprehending and detaining criminals. Local magistrates were responsible for tracking down and arresting

brigands and robbers in the territory of their city. Prisoners frequently underwent preliminary interrogation by local magistrates who, then, either sent them under escort to the governor or detained them pending the governor's arrival in the city. For example during a pogrom against Christians at Smyrna, c. 155, the bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, fled the city. He was hunted down and arrested by a local magistrate, 'the warden of the peace', and his police force who held him in prison at Smyrna to await the arrival of the governor. Criminal charges of all kinds were also laid by private initiative. Injured parties, their relatives, personal enemies, or *delatores* could petition the governor for leave to bring a formal accusation. If the governor assented, either the accuser personally served a copy of the charge or the governor authorized an official summons which ordered the accused to appear at an assize.

When assize-hearings commenced, two procedures were open to the governor. First, he could mete out summary justice, especially on non-citizens, without recourse to a formal hearing. Prisoners accused of brigandage were often summarily executed on the basis of the preliminary investigations of local magistrates. Gaol clearances were also conducted in which the governor had the power to condemn on the spot those whom he considered manifestly guilty. This summary procedure, which was also used for minor crimes, was termed *de piano* justice and stood in contrast to the second procedure open to the governor, a full scale court-hearing at his tribunal (*pro tribunal*). Under this procedure litigants were represented by advocates, and written and oral evidence was taken from witnesses and interested parties. The governor presided over the trial with the help of an advisory body known as a *consilium*. A *consilium* was normally recruited from the *amici* of the governor and members of the local elite. For example, in 60 in Caesarea, when Paul appealed to be tried at Rome the governor, Festus, adjudicated this claim with the help of Agrippa II, a descendant of Herod, officers of the auxiliary troops stationed in Judaea and 'the leading men of the city'. A *consilium* was not however a jury. The governor might take its advice on matters of fact or law, but the final decisions as to guilt and any appropriate penalty were his alone.

The assize-system of peripatetic hearings and the reliance on local civic or private initiative, for the detection of criminals and for the laying of accusations, provided two structural constraints on the governor's exercise of his supreme powers of jurisdiction. In the course of the court-hearings themselves, from pre-trial preliminaries to the act of sentencing, the governor possessed a wide-ranging discretion and freedom of action which were on the one hand partially limited by rules of statute law and on the

other continually shaped and restrained by the informal and formal demands of status. First to be considered is statute law. Roman criminal law presented in no way as an elaborate and sophisticated edifice of rules and procedure as Roman civil law. Some crimes (e.g. adultery, poisoning) were indeed defined by statute laws which laid down correct court procedure and prescribed appropriate penalties. Such statutes, in strict theory, only applied to Roman citizens, who also enjoyed the right of appeal from the sentence of the governor to the emperor. Non-citizens, in contrast, were always liable to undergo the summary procedure which has been described above. The scope of statute law was, however, restricted, and governors were always at liberty to define as criminal activities which were not covered by such laws. The dictum *nullum crimen sine lege* was alien to Roman practice. In Egypt, for example, causing damage to an irrigation dyke or cutting down mulberry trees, which were planted on dykes to strengthen them, were considered capital offences; they had clearly been created by the prefect of Egypt. Other offences were created which were actionable throughout the Empire. For example, no general law outlawing Christianity was ever promulgated during the first two centuries AD, but by precedent and custom all provincial governors came to treat being a Christian as a capital offence. Within the category of non-statute offences governors were originally free, in contrast to statute offences, to fix the appropriate penalties as they saw fit; so, the penalties for rustling varied between provinces. The principal legal restraint on the governor in such cases was the right of Roman citizens to appeal against conviction to the emperor. The contrast in possible treatment between citizens and non-citizens is well illustrated by an incident in the province of Pontus-Bithynia, c. AD 110. When certain provincial subjects were accused of being Christians, the governor accepted the charges and conducted an investigation. Of those who confessed and refused to recant, the non-citizens were summarily executed, while the citizens were transferred to Rome.

The second factor which shaped the governor's handling of criminal trials was the social status of the litigants and other interested parties. The status of defendants, especially, affected all aspects of criminal procedure. During the course of the second century AD, the advantages and privileges of high social status were codified and reformulated by a series of imperial rulings which were especially directed to the judicial activities of provincial governors. For analytical purposes the judicial process can usefully be separated into three elements: pre-trial preliminaries, the trial, and sentencing. During the preliminaries, if the defendant had been accused

by private summons, the governor had to decide whether to imprison him, allow him to be given bail, or let him remain at liberty under his own recognizances. Although the governor took into consideration the seriousness and character of the alleged crime, the main criteria for his decision were the status, wealth and character of the accused. In general few rules structured the practical organization of assizes. No formal mechanisms existed to regulate the delivery of petitions by prospective litigants to the governor or to fix the order in which cases would be held at any specific assize. There was not even any assurance that all litigants who had gathered at an assize would obtain a hearing. This lack of fixed procedures helped to ensure the effective operation of the informal social influences of status and bribery. For example in 158–9, when the governor of Africa heard a charge of misuse of magical practices laid against the rhetorician Apuleius (author of the Golden Ass), the case was completed only five days after the charge had been brought. Apuleius thought that the speed with which the case was heard helped to prevent the forgery of documents by his accusers and specifically thanked the governor for the favour of hearing the case so quickly.

During a trial the influence of social status was most apparent in the evaluation of evidence. Various imperial rulings encouraged governors to attach great weight to the status and wealth of witnesses and to their general character and repute. Slaves, in contrast, were routinely subjected to torture as witnesses, a practice which was probably *de facto* extended for some purposes to freeborn provincials of low status by the end of the second century. Cognately high-status provincials could hope to promote their own interests by producing letters of recommendation, especially if written by patrons within the imperial aristocracy. Penalties on conviction, unless laid down for citizens by statute, originally lay within the discretion of the governors. During the course of the second century a series of imperial rulings were issued which created *de iure* a dual-penalty system whose main consequence was to entrench the privileges of high-status defendants. The example of capital punishments will suffice to illustrate the general picture. Low status defendants were frequently executed by public crucifixion or by condemnation to the beasts at the periodic festivals and public spectacles which occurred in all provinces. Such cruel and public execution acted as a ritual demonstration of the power of the imperial state. High-status defendants, in contrast, were scarcely ever executed, instead they suffered deportation to an island or relegation from their province. Members of the local political elites (civic magistrates and councillors) were especially privileged in that any governor who wished to impose on

them the sentence of deportation had automatically to write to the emperor to acquire confirmation of his decision.

The entrenchment, by way of codification, of the privileges of the provincial upperclass represented in formal terms at least an important restriction on the governor's discretionary use of his jurisdictional and coercive powers. In practice the restriction was more apparent than real, since governors had always exercised their discretion in the context of their own social values. As one eminent senator in c. 100 wrote to another junior senator, about to take up a second office as a governor:

You have done splendidly – and I hope you will not rest on your laurels – in commending your administration of justice to the provincials by your great tact. This you reveal particularly in the consideration you show for the best men yet in such a way as to win the reverence of the lower orders at the same time as you hold the affection of their superiors. Many men, in their anxiety to avoid seeming to show excessive favour to men of influence, succeed only in gaining a reputation for perversity and malice. I know there is no chance of your falling prey to that vice, but in praising you for the way you tread the middle course, I cannot help sounding as if I were offering you advice: namely, that you should maintain the distinctions between ranks and degrees of dignity. Nothing could be more unequal than that equality which results when those distinctions are confused or broken down. (Pliny, *Letters*, 9.5)

If criminal jurisdiction and the maintenance of internal order in his province represented the prime judicial task of any governor, his tribunal also operated as a forum for the resolution of material and other disputes, between individuals, by his exercise of civil jurisdiction. Consequently civil litigants faced many of the same problems as litigants in criminal cases: difficulties of access to the governor's tribunal, the lack of a fixed ordering of cases, the possibilities of severe delays. *Mutatis mutandis* high-status litigants gained advantages analogous to those their peers gained in criminal hearings. Two additional factors, specific to the exercise of civil jurisdiction, also deserve emphasis. First, local courts – that is, courts controlled and organized by the local authorities of each city in a province – possessed legitimate jurisdiction in civil cases over their own subjects, unless they had become Roman citizens. Second, Roman civil law: provincials who acquired Roman citizenship by definition organized their affairs (e.g. wills) according to the tenets of Roman civil law; in principle the proper tribunal for hearing cases between Roman citizens under the

aegis of Roman law was that of the governor. In many areas (e.g. property, inheritance) Roman civil law provided a highly developed and elaborate set of rules and procedures. The spread of Roman citizenship and, thus, Roman law, especially among the upper class of the provinces, offered them a rational method of adjudication in disputes and, thereby, an ordered framework for the organization of their routine material, commercial and social existence.

To sum up. The Roman government maintained internal peace and provided a regular system of adjudication, by way of the mechanisms of civil and criminal jurisdiction, through a continuous process of co-operation with the local system of rule. The specific forms of interdependence and co-operation, which were especially significant for the operation of criminal jurisdiction, served to entrench the dominant local political role of the local elites. Also the formal rules and informal practices of Roman jurisdiction offered privileges to the socially advantaged in general (Roman citizens) and, in particular, to provincials of high social status, especially local magistrates and councillors. The maintenance of internal order and the entrenchment of privilege within the social order were mutually dependent and reinforcing processes.

The supervision of local administration

Administrative structures provide the mechanism for the allocation and supervision of resources, the implementation of policies and rules, and the resolution of conflicts between interested parties; in the Roman Empire parallel central and local authorities exercised these tasks. The governor possessed an untrammelled discretionary power to intervene in the administrative affairs of the subject cities of his province. Paradoxically this power was not matched by equivalent bureaucratic resources ([p. 426](#) above). The local authorities, consequently, maintained *de facto* a wide-ranging control over their internal administrative affairs. No clear demarcation of mutually exclusive areas of competence between the governor and the local authorities existed except in rare instances where normative rules were enacted which required the local authorities to gain the approval of governor and/or emperor for specific types of administrative decisions. For the sake of analysis it is easiest to proceed by describing first those administrative activities where the local authorities exercised a day-to-day control, subject only to the occasional possible

intervention of the governor.

Local magistrates and councils exercised responsibility for the supervision of the needs and services of civic life, such as the corn and food supplies, the regulation of prices and the markets, the public baths and gymnasia, the maintenance of the streets, sewerage and the water-supply, the public record-offices, the construction and repair of public and religious buildings, the holding of customary games and festivals. The extent and diversity of these tasks varied from city to city. Great cities like Carthage, Antioch or Ephesus possessed resplendent public buildings and ruled large territorial hinterlands. Other cities were little more than villages. Despite such variety of scale the functions of the local authorities were similar: to meet the perceived needs of communal existence through the supervision of financial and physical resources earmarked for those needs.

Within this framework of effective local autonomy governors were able to intervene at their own initiative or, more likely, at the request of the local authorities. For example at Antioch in Pisidia, *c.* AD 93, the local authorities wrote to the governor to inform him that their corn supply had dried up because of the severity of the winter and to seek his help to secure a supply for sale. The governor, in reply, ordered all the inhabitants of the city and its territory to declare before the local magistrates the amount and location of all their grain. Any surplus, beyond what was needed for seeding and for the feeding of their own families, was to be made available to the city's buyers. The governor backed his edict with the threat of judicial sanctions against people who hoarded supplies of corn contrary to his orders. At Ephesus in the mid-second century the local authorities were unable to enforce their harbour regulations which were designed to protect access to the quayside. The governor of Asia, in response to their request for help, issued new rulings and announced that anybody found contravening his edict would have to render account for their disobedience before his tribunal.

Financial administration, in the sense of raising, protecting, and allocating resources, posed continuous difficulties for the local authorities, and was, therefore, the sphere of administration in which governors intervened most often. A governor, if local difficulties were deep-seated and wide-ranging, could issue detailed reformatory rulings. For example in *c.* AD 45 the governor of Asia attempted to suppress the maladministration and malversation of civic and temple funds at Ephesus. His rulings embraced, among other things, abusive auctions of the local priesthood, the borrowing of money by the city in greater amounts than could be repaid from current income, the pledging of future civic income as security for

present loans, the diversion of funds bequeathed for fixed purposes to others, the payments for performers at religious festivals. Many financial problems were not so far-reaching. Cities sometimes found themselves either unable to enforce their legitimate rights over public lands in their territory or were challenged in their claim to ownership. Consequently governors were asked to intervene to help to restore public lands or to judge disputes over ownership. When, in the late second century, jurists wrote handbooks on the duties of provincial governors, they advised them that the leasing out and control of public land should be a matter of special concern.

The problems of local financial administration stemmed primarily from two causes, first, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds and second, the weakness of the local tax-base; the latter phenomenon was a direct consequence of the prior lien of the imperial state on resources through the direct tax on land, the tribute (p. 427 above). The recurrence of financial problems and of requests from cities for intervention by the governors led the imperial government to appoint special financial commissioners (*curators*) who were attached to individual cities or, rarely, groups of cities. These commissioners are first attested in the late first century; the number of such appointments was at first very small though it increased sensibly in the late second and third centuries. They were recruited at first only from the ranks of the imperial aristocracy (senators and equestrians), later also from the upper echelons of provincial society. Their powers were restricted solely to the supervision of local financial administration. Although the appointment of *curators* added a measure of flexibility to the Roman government's response to requests for help, this institution did not mark a radical break with past practice. For the numbers of financial commissioners appointed remained, at all periods, very small in relation to the number of civic communities in the provinces. For example in the provinces of North Africa (Mauretania, Numidia, Africa Proconsularis) between AD 196 and 270 thirty-two *curators* are known to have been appointed; in the province of Asia, where at least 300 civic communities existed, only thirty appointments are known between AD 160 and 260.

The emergence of *curators* was a qualitatively important phenomenon because they represented the only institutional novelty of this period which supplemented the effective powers of provincial governors, especially their capacity to meet demands made by the local authorities. Nothing suggests, however, that the appointment of *curators* was intended to lead or ever did lead to the removal of responsibility for local financial administration from the local authorities. Once a *curator* had completed his tenure of office,

responsibility, including the enforcement of any new regulations created by him, reverted to the local authorities. The overall structure of administrative authority in the provinces and the relative influence of the agents of local and central power were modified but not radically changed by the creation of *curators*.

Two exceptions exist within the general model of a day-to-day local administrative autonomy operating under the canopy of the discretionary control of the Roman governor. These exceptions concern the questions of policy and law-making by individual cities and of their external relations. The two questions can be considered briefly in turn. Local authorities throughout our period maintained a legitimate power to pass laws of a purely local import without recourse to ratification by the Roman government. For example cities were able to create new citizens, to draw up regulations controlling the conduct of local police forces in their subject territory, to issue rules for the leasing out and cultivation of public lands, or to regulate the activities of religious associations and cults. But, as far as financial policy was concerned, the Roman government enacted normative rules which limited the powers of local authorities to raise new taxes and to undertake large-scale new building operations which involved additional expenditure from civic funds. The prior permission of the emperor, mediated through the governor, was required before new local taxes could be raised. The standard procedure is clearly laid down in an extant letter of the joint emperors Severus and Caracalla:

the exaction of new taxes should not be granted lightly; but if your home-state is so weak (in resources) that it needs to be helped by extraordinary aid, present to the governor of the province the facts you have gathered into this petition. That man, after careful investigation of the situation and consideration of the common interest, will report to us what he has discovered. We will then judge whether and to what extent your account should be accepted. (*Codex Justinianus* 4.62. 1)

Although the exact origins of this procedure are not known, it was already in force in the first century. During the reign of Vespasian, for example, the town of Sabora in Baetica petitioned the emperor, among other matters, for the right to levy new taxes. Vespasian replied that he confirmed the taxes

which you say you received from Augustus (the first emperor), but if you wish to introduce any new ones you should approach the governor about them, for I cannot make any decision if I have no advice on this matter.

A cognate procedure existed to control the construction of new public buildings at public expense, the commonest form of long-term major additional expenditure on which a city might embark. By the late-second century provincial governors were advised that:

new *private* building is possible without the permission of the emperor as long as it is not of the kind done in emulation of another city, nor provides the basis for rioting (*seditio*), nor is a circus, theatre or amphitheatre. But at *public* expense new public work is not possible without the permission of the emperor. That is declared in constitutions. (*Digest* 50.10.3.-1: Macer, *On the Duties of Provincial Governors*, Bk 2)

Financial motives clearly lay behind this attempted control by the Roman government. For example when, early in the second century, a governor of Pontus-Bithynia consulted the emperor Trajan, about plans for new baths at Prusa, he replied that

if the construction of the new baths will not burden the resources of Prusa, we can grant their request; only let no special tax be levied nor let any less revenue in the future accrue to them for their necessary expenses.

Explanation of this normative control of local financial policy, which stands in contrast to the general practice of an intermittent and discretionary intervention in and control of local affairs, is not hard to seek. The economy of the empire produced only a limited surplus which had to provide, through rents, for private elite consumption and, through taxation, for the fiscal demands of the imperial state. The revenue-raising needs of the provincial cities stood in competition with private rent and imperial taxation. The imperial state, therefore, attempted to protect its own position by delimiting the fiscal powers of the authorities of the provincial cities.

Finally and briefly, the external relations of the cities must be considered. Although they could make claim, whether directly by petition or through the mediation of influential patrons, to a variety of privileged statuses (such as, e.g., first city of their province, assize-centre, centre for celebrating the imperial cult or immunity from tribute), such privileges were only in the gift of the Roman government. Similarly disputes between communities over the ownership of land or the mutual allocation of tax-burdens were always settled by the governor or specially designated mandatories of the imperial state. No other legitimate mechanisms existed for the ordering and settlement of such disputes.

To sum up. Administrative authority over the population of the provinces was exercised by two parallel, but unequal, powers, the provincial governor and the political authorities of each city. The subordination of the local authorities to the central power (normally represented by the governor) manifested itself in a variety of ways: the discretionary ability of the governor to intervene in any administrative matter he chose, the role of his tribunal to adjudicate disputes between communities, the exercise of his superior sanctions at the request of any local authority to reinforce their powers, the creation of a limited set of prescriptive rules which required the local authorities to obtain approval and ratification for specific administrative decisions and policies from the imperial power. Despite this political subordination the local authorities exercised a wide-ranging routine administrative control over the provincial population. The representatives of the imperial power exercised their authority in general in a discretionary, not a routine, fashion.

Concluding remarks

The Roman government achieved its two major administrative goals, the extraction of a regular surplus (taxation) and internal peace (jurisdiction), only through the routine co-operation of the local system of rule with the elite administrators appointed to each province. The provincial governor possessed supreme discretionary authority in his province, an authority manifested most strikingly in his powers of life and death over his provincial subjects. Governors and procurators acted as the final arbiters of all forms of dispute, whether administrative, fiscal, judicial or territorial. Most of the routine procedures of administration and jurisdiction were devolved on the local authorities. The mass of provincial subjects scarcely come into direct contact with the elite representatives of the imperial state. Instead contact was routinely mediated through the local authorities. They continued, also, to exercise legitimate authority over their subjects as far as purely local matters were concerned. Their local political authority was enhanced by their role as surrogate administrative agents of the imperial state, and they were rewarded for their service by the acquisition of judicial privileges.

Four consequences of the administrative goals and procedures of the Roman government deserve emphasis for their wider historical implications. First, the regular extraction of resources, through taxation,

provided the means to finance the standing armies which protected the Empire from external attacks and invasions, while the exercise of jurisdiction ensured a level of internal peace. Internal peace and the absence of foreign invasions underpinned the political unity of the empire. Second, both the goals of Roman government, and the specific methods created to achieve them, reinforced the social and political hierarchy within the provinces and helped to integrate the local elites into the imperial system of rule. Third, continuous internal peace provided a secure framework for economic activity, especially agriculture and trade. The economically powerful, especially provincial land-owners from whom the majority of the local political élite were recruited, were enabled to maintain and reproduce, across time, their economic hegemony. Fourth, the practice of devolving much responsibility for the collection of taxes and for the execution of justice on the local authorities served continuously to entrench their local political power. In short, Roman rule was predicated on, recognized and enhanced the social and political hierarchy of the provinces.

· LAW · AND · THE · LEGAL ·
· SYSTEM · IN · THE ·
· PRINCIPATE ·

Elizabeth Green

A knowledge of law and of the legal system is of particular relevance for an understanding of Roman history because of the interest taken in law by the Romans, to which the abundance of juristic evidence testifies. This evidence sheds light not only on their social life and institutions but also on the workings of politics and of the Roman legal mind.

The excellence of Roman law is attested by its adoption as the basis of numerous modern legal systems. This process owes much to the great codification of Roman law authorized by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century AD, which brought together into a convenient form both a wide range of imperial enactments and numerous excerpts from the writings of the most famous jurists. The basic pattern of Roman law and its most fundamental principles were established during the Republic, but it was under the Empire that Roman law is generally thought to have reached its peak, and thus the second century and the first half of the third century is a period designated by scholars as the Classical period of Roman law. The main characteristic of the period was the assiduous, consolidating activity among the great jurists of the time; thus most by far of the juristic excerpts preserved in Justinian's codification are taken from their works.

The imperial period is not only of interest because of the juristic literature produced. Clearly the transition from Republic to Empire raises many important and interesting questions concerning both the continuing

relevance of republican legal institutions and processes and the competence of the emperor to influence the formulation and application of the law. In addition, there were many developments under the Empire which could not fail to have important legal implications, among these the changing role of political institutions, notably the Senate, the growth of a professional imperial administration and the large-scale extension of the Roman citizenship. This chapter is therefore designed to look at the effect on Roman law and the legal system of the advent of the emperor as a law-maker and as a judge.

The emperor as law-maker

It has often been said that Augustus, while establishing for himself a position of supremacy, realized the need to avoid an undisguised, blatant accumulation of personal power, and to display sensitivity towards the nostalgic regard in which republican institutions, practices and privileges were held. The masterly diplomacy with which he achieved his difficult task is well illustrated in the area of law-making. Clearly he could not achieve supremacy without gaining control over the formulation of law whether public or private, nor did he wish to cast aside the traditional republican organs and procedures of law-making within which there was technically no place for the emperor. There is, in fact, no need to assume that Augustus' reluctance to do so was based only on fear of the consequences of such an action; the way in which he manipulated existing institutions suggests that he recognized the value of the various checks and balances inherent in them. In the second and third centuries the jurists were claiming that the emperor's pronouncements had the force of law (Gaius, *Institutiones*, 1.5; Ulpian, D.1.4.1pr,1). The basis of this claim is not easy to discern, and Augustus and his immediate successors, at least, did not make such a claim, but exercised their influence within a gradually changing framework inherited from the Republic.

The fact that Augustus and his successors were able to influence the formulation of law ostensibly within this framework, is indicative of the flexibility and adaptability of these republican institutions. One of the most notable features of the republican legal system was the tendency for new practices and institutions to be introduced alongside old ones when the need for them arose, and gradually to encroach on the competence of the old without totally superseding them. It was for this reason that by the end

of the Republic there were various channels through which law might be made. Thus Cicero enumerates the sources of law as statute, senatorial decrees, previous judgments, the authority of the jurists, the edicts of magistrates, custom and equity. The most important of those listed are statutes passed through the popular assemblies (that is, *leges* and *plebiscita* passed through the *comitia* and *concilium plebis* respectively), juristic interpretation, senatorial decrees and magisterial edicts.

Interpretation of the civil law was originally a privilege exercised by the priests, but was at an early stage taken over by a group of legal experts, mainly of senatorial rank, but towards the end of the Republic increasingly of equestrian rank. Since Republican magistrates and judges were not themselves legal experts, it is easy to see how necessary the role of the jurists was and how profound their influence. As for senatorial decrees (*senatusconsulta*), many scholars believe that these were strictly only advisory. Whatever their precise status, they clearly had great influence, in practice, along with the magisterial edict, in supplementing statute law. The development of magisterial law (*ius honorarium*) is perhaps the best illustration of the tendency of the Romans to improvise and to bring in new practices alongside the old. The limitations of statute law and the rigidity of the processes associated with it were, to some extent, overcome by the competence of the republican magistrates, notably the praetors, to issue edicts on entering office, laying down the circumstances in which they would grant or refuse actions at law. Thus new rules and institutions gradually grew up alongside the old *ius civile*.

None of these channels of law-making was formally abolished by Augustus. The popular assemblies continued to meet in order to pass *plebiscita* and *leges* on the proposal of magistrates; praetors, aediles and provincial governors still enjoyed the right to issue edicts; and the Senate was active in passing decrees. Yet what is known of the content of the legislation of the Augustan period strongly suggests his influence on the formulation of every enactment, however it was made law. Possession of *tribunicia potestas* enabled him actually to propose some laws, presumably to the *concilium*, and thus there are several *leges Iuliae* dated to his reign. But there is also evidence of laws which were presumably passed in the *comitia*, since they bear the names of the consuls. The evidence suggests that these *leges* belong to the latter period of the reign of Augustus, while the *leges Iuliae* attested all date to the earlier period. Whatever the reason for this, the content of the statutes suggests that they were all the work of a single legislator.

Statutes continued to be supplemented by *senatusconsulta*, and some

believe that these decrees acquired strict law-making status at this time because of the association of the emperor with the Senate and its decrees (Watson, 1974, 21ff.). Certainly, by the second century AD, the jurists were attributing undisputed legal status to resolutions of the Senate. However, it is not possible to designate a specific point at which theoretical legal force was granted to them, and they seem to have enjoyed as much efficacy, at least in practice, during the Republic as under the empire. What is important here is that the Senate's activities in the legal sphere did not become obsolete, and that Augustus, in fact, aimed to enhance the prestige and self-consciousness of this body. Nevertheless the existence of a figure possessing the power and *auctoritas* of Augustus makes the formal privileges of senators appear, to a considerable degree, to have been compensation for the loss of real power which they had enjoyed during the Republic. Augustus was entitled to sit between the consuls at meetings of the Senate, but his main channel of communication with this body, and thus influence over senatorial proceedings, was a select group of friends or advisers of senatorial rank, the members of his *consilium*. As in the case of statutes, the nature of the Augustan *senatusconsulta*, for which there is evidence, strongly suggests his personal influence in this area. It seems, therefore, that as well as safeguarding senatorial *dignitas*, Augustus saw the continued enactment of *senatusconsulta* as another channel through which he could supplement his law-making activities.

Just as the Senate continued to enjoy competence in law-making, so certain magistrates retained the right to issue edicts relating to their spheres of office. This conveniently enabled Augustus to issue edicts, and there is evidence of his doing so in his capacity as proconsul of his vast province. However, he does not seem to have limited his edicts to the affairs of these areas, and the sources also attest Augustan edicts relating to issues of private law which were clearly designed to have a general application. Some associate his right to issue edicts with his supposed possession of consular *imperium*. But this would only have extended his competence to Rome and Italy. It is more likely that his *auctoritas* made it acceptable for his right to issue edicts relating to his province to develop into a more general right. At any rate, his activity in this area seems to have overshadowed that of the other magistrates, for the evidence suggests little enterprise or innovation by anyone else.

The role of the jurists under Augustus is a much debated issue. Clearly there was still a need for advice to be submitted by these experts to the magistrates and judges (including the emperor), who continued to be men without any particular legal expertise. The controversy centres on a

statement made by the second-century jurist Pomponius, preserved in Justinian's *Digest* in which he attributes to Augustus a measure which gave to certain favoured jurists the right to give opinions 'by his authority'. This seems to be confirmed by Gaius who says that the answers of the jurisprudents are the decisions and opinions of those who have been authorized to lay down the law. Scholars are divided over the exact status which this gave to the opinions of jurists who either did or did not enjoy this privilege. Gaius, writing in the second century, adds that an opinion held by all the privileged jurists had the force of law. This provides an indication of the prestige associated with such jurists, which must have rendered the opinions of any others, if not valueless, at least of very limited worth. Augustus presumably wished to curtail independent activity by jurists, and to make those who were able to influence the law to some extent dependent on him. More importantly, he perhaps wished the most eminent jurists to be identified with him, so that juristic activity should be associated with his rule. The evidence suggests that the jurists whom Augustus favoured were senators, a reversal of the trend towards equestrians of the late Republic. It may be seen as part of Augustus' attempt to enhance the prestige of the senatorial order and that of juristic science, as a response to complaints expressed, for example, by Cicero, that jurisprudence had become chaotic and discredited.

Honoré has argued that one of Augustus' methods of effecting change in the law was to persuade the jurists to agree to an innovation (Honoré, 1981, 3). He cites a passage in Justinian's *Institutes* in which is described the process whereby Augustus gathered some jurists together and persuaded them to agree to a measure which would provide legal validity for codicils, informal documents sometimes appended to wills. Another passage from the *Institutes* describes the repeated order by Augustus to the consuls to use their authority to enforce trusts, which had hitherto not been legally binding. Honoré sees Augustus acting in these incidents like a republican praetor in taking on a reforming role. What, in fact, seems to emerge most forcibly from these passages of the *Institutes* is the enormous prestige enjoyed by Augustus which made any precedent set by him sufficiently influential gradually to be adopted into legal practice and accepted by lawyers. It was this same prestige which perhaps gave to *senatusconsulta* (with which the emperor was associated) and to the opinions of the approved jurists, a higher status in the eyes of lawyers, than they had enjoyed in the Republic. It also underlies the system of rescripts (discussed below [p. 446](#)) which later emerged, whereby the advice or instructions obtained by individuals or by communities from the emperor came to be

regarded as legislative by the jurists. Thus in issuing rescripts, the emperor took on the role both of republican praetor and of jurist. At the time of Augustus this system had not yet developed. He therefore exploited all the existing channels of law-making, engineering a place for himself within them and, as it were, feeling his way. At the same time, the prestige which he built up and the precedents he established, strengthened the position of the emperor within these existing channels and undermined the roles of others. Thus changes were effected, and the basis laid for the rescript system which was eventually to overshadow every other law-making channel.

The actual volume of legislation issued under Augustus was enormous, as might be expected from a long reign which was historically so crucial. It is interesting that a close examination of much of his legislation shows that it was far less traditionally republican than it at first appears. Two laws relating to marriage were complex statutes which represented intervention in the realm of family law on a scale which is not comparable to that of the republican censors. In addition, the privileges and penalties introduced by these Augustan statutes had implications for the attaining of magistracies, the rights of tutors (that is, those appointed to oversee the affairs of women and of boys under age), the powers of fathers of households (*patres familiarum*) over those descendants under their control, the rights of patrons over their freed slaves and above all for the rules of inheritance. It was clearly useful for Augustus to exercise influence in all of these areas of the law by means of statutes supposedly designed to promote traditional virtues. A similar encroachment on the rights of private individuals is to be seen in another important Augustan statute, the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, which added to the republican standing criminal courts (*quaestiones*, p. 451 below), one for the prosecution of adultery. This involved a loss of authority for the *paterfamilias* who had previously been responsible for the punishment of acts of adultery within his *familia*. His rights and those of the husband of an adulteress were redefined, and rules were introduced regulating the prosecution and punishment of those involved in adultery.

An interesting measure often attributed to Augustus is the ban on the contracting of valid marriages by soldiers: this ban was evidently introduced in the very early Empire although there is no firm evidence which associates it with Augustus (Campbell, 1978, 153ff.). It was a rather severe restriction, especially in the light of the marriage laws, and subsequent emperors tried to alleviate the consequences for soldiers in various ways, until Septimius Severus, as is suggested by Herodian, lifted

the ban. If it was indeed an Augustan measure, it would provide support for the view that the enactments of Augustus were regarded with such reverence by subsequent emperors that there was great reluctance to repeal them. The penalties associated with the marriage laws, for example, continued to be effective until AD 320 when they were repealed by Constantine, and it was around the same time that changes were made to the adultery law; the *quaestio de adulteriis* was the last of the standing courts to be abolished. Thus the characteristic Roman tendency to modify and adapt rather than formally to abolish institutions seems to have been particularly evident in the case of the laws of Augustus.

Law-making after Augustus

As the principate became more firmly established after Augustus, it is interesting to see how the traditional forms of law-making were gradually overshadowed by the pronouncements of the emperor in various different capacities. A number of popular statutes were passed under the Julio-Claudians, especially Claudius, but by the end of the first century AD the popular assemblies had died out, and the last popular statute for which there is firm evidence was a *lex Cocceia agraria* under Nerva. *Senatusconsulta*, however, did not die out, but continued to be important until the third century AD for the modification and application of rules of law. It is unlikely that any resolution of the Senate was passed without the approval of its most important member, the emperor. Not only could, and did, he propose *senatusconsulta*, but he might even have them proposed in his absence by means of an *oratio* read on his behalf in the Senate. The juristic evidence suggests that the Senate's adoption of the emperor's proposal became a mere formality, since by the later second century the jurists referred to imperial *orationes* as if they were legal enactments; references to *sca* after Hadrian are rare.

The composition of the Senate had, of course, by this time undergone considerable change. As Roman citizenship was systematically granted to people living in all the provinces of the Empire, so the urban aristocracies of the most civilized parts came to be represented in the Senate. Thus it was that men of provincial origin were able to pass through its ranks to the highest position of emperor. In spite of its changing composition, the Senate continued to be jealous of its privileges, and while the close association of the emperor with it no doubt enhanced its prestige, no less

was that of the emperor enhanced by his close association with the Senate; there was mutual benefit. Nevertheless, whatever prestige and respect the Senate enjoyed, its real influence on legislation cannot fail to have been further curtailed, not only by the increasing importance of the various types of imperial enactment which involved members of an ever-growing bureaucracy, rather than the Senate, but also by the tendency for many of the emperors in the second and third centuries to spend long periods away from Rome.

Absence from Rome might prevent the emperor from making use of the traditional organs of law-making, but wherever he went he was accompanied by members of his *consilium* and of his bureaucracy; hence the increasing importance and volume of measures enacted with the co-operation of these assistants. It has already been observed that Augustus exercised the right which continued to be enjoyed by the holders of certain magistracies of issuing edicts. His activity in this area seems to have inhibited that of other competent magistrates, and the lack of innovation by the praetors, who had, in the Republic, exercised so much influence on the law, culminated in the consolidation of the praetor's edict during the reign of Hadrian. The jurist Julianus was ordered to perform this task, and the resulting codified edict provided material for a great deal of subsequent juristic commentary.

The emperors after Augustus continued to issue general edicts relating to issues of public and of private law. However, the evidence suggests that far more common imperial pronouncements were rescripts, that is, the replies of the emperor to requests for instructions, either from magistrates or official bodies, or from individuals. The emperor might be required to provide a political decision (such as a grant or refusal of certain privileges) or he might be asked for a ruling in a case of private law. Obviously some of these replies would have involved merely a restatement of the law as it stood, but in other cases a new ruling might be necessary. Similarly, the decisions of the emperor in his role as a judge (p. 451 below), known as decrees, might also involve establishing new principles.

Thus while some of the traditional forms exploited by Augustus continued to be useful, others disappeared, the gap being filled by the increasingly authoritative pronouncements of the emperor. The imperial rescript system became a complex and organized one. It was clearly necessary for the smooth and uniform running of affairs in the Empire for the emperor to provide replies to all the requests for advice and legal rulings which seem to have poured in from officials responsible for law and order in the provinces. Similarly it was important that the principle of the

accessibility of the emperor be upheld by the provision of rulings on behalf of individuals who asked for them either in person, by letter or through the agency of the provincial governor. There is evidence of only a few rescripts from the reigns of the earlier emperors, but the system clearly became more common by the second century, and well over a hundred rescripts are attested from the reign of Hadrian (Gualandi, 1963, 24–57).

The number of constitutions preserved in Justinian's *Code* directed to officials in the provinces which merely state the existing law suggests considerable ignorance on the part of these men. This is not surprising, considering that, as in the republican period, most officials had no particular legal training. During the Republic, provincial governors would have consulted the legal experts on their staff. But now that legal advice independent of the emperor had been undermined, requests for advice and instructions were largely directed to him and to his staff. As far as individuals involved in law cases were concerned, a statement from the emperor on a straightforward point of law might be required not because of ignorance, but because the assertion in a rescript of a principle which favoured them would be invaluable.

One of the most controversial questions is that of the exact status of imperial rescripts. When enquiries were made by officials or by individuals involved in law-suits, it is questionable whether the emperor's ruling was strictly binding, and, if it was, whether a general principle was established by such a ruling applicable beyond the individual case concerned. There is no evidence of a specific grant being made to any emperor which would have made his replies to requests for legal rulings more than advisory. Thus the claim of the jurist Gaius that the emperor's enactments have always been regarded as having legal force is based on a rather doubtful argument. Nevertheless, an official who asked for a ruling from the emperor was hardly likely to disregard his reply. More importantly, the fact that the classical jurists attribute law-making powers to the emperor suggests that because of the prestige which he enjoyed, rescripts and decrees, known, together with edicts as imperial constitutions, gradually came to be regarded in practice as not merely advisory nor of limited relevance, but as having a general, binding application.

There were, of course, replies made by emperors which were clearly intended to have a local and limited application, such as grants made to communities of certain privileges or rights. There is also evidence to suggest a reluctance on the part of some emperors to make rulings on certain issues which would have a general application. For example, Trajan, in his correspondence with Pliny, says that he cannot make a

general ruling concerning the obligation for members of local senates to make a certain pecuniary contribution. Honoré (1979, 52) argues, in addition, that in the case of petitioners involved in law-suits, a judge was not obliged to await the arrival of the emperor's reply before pronouncing sentence. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that a favourable reply from the emperor to an enquiry made by an individual involved in a case of law, if received in time, would have greatly improved his position, virtually ensuring his success, and it is scarcely less likely that the judge involved would have felt bound by the ruling. Thus rescripts were, at least in practice, authoritative and influential. The number of references to imperial rescripts in the excerpts from the juristic commentaries preserved in Justinian's *Digest* provides a good indication of the increasing importance of these rulings in the formulation of Roman law. The evidence also suggests that the decision of an emperor was not regarded as relevant only for the duration of his reign. Clearly there must have been occasions when a ruling had to be abrogated or modified by a subsequent emperor, but there seems to have been a great reluctance to do this.

As the rescript system grew in importance as a source of law, it was clearly impossible for the emperor himself to deal with all of the work involved. Thus secretaries concerned with the various types of reply required were appointed within the administrative system. The people involved came to be largely men of equestrian status, whose main task initially must have been to provide information, no doubt by referring to precedents recorded in the archives, which would enable the emperor to make his reply. As more and more constitutions were issued, so those employed in this way must have come to possess considerable expertise and responsibility.

The question thus arises as to the degree of personal involvement on the part of the emperor in the issuing of rescripts. The wording of some of them strongly suggests the emperor's personal interest in the matter in question (Ulpian, D.42.1.33, see Williams, 1976, 69). On the other hand, it has been argued that the work of secretaries can be detected in the texts of preserved rescripts. Honoré (1979, 52ff.) believes that a study of the rescripts concerning issues of private law reveals a consistency of style over certain periods which corresponds to the terms in office of certain secretaries rather than to the reigns of certain emperors. In fact, some of his arguments are not convincing, and caution is necessary in drawing conclusions regarding responsibility for composition from literary style, since allowance must be made for conformity to accepted legal phraseology. Nevertheless, the existence of a secretary and staff responsible

for rescripts suggests some degree of delegation, and in cases of petitions requiring simple statements of the law on certain uncontroversial issues, the personal involvement of the emperor would hardly have been necessary. It was sufficient that his name be appended to the reply in order to make it authoritative in court for the benefit of the petitioner. The fact that there is some evidence for the employment of well-known jurists as secretaries (although Syme (1984, 1393) argues that the extent of this has been greatly exaggerated), suggests that some emperors wished to be able to leave the answering of petitions for rulings on private law issues to them. This is not to deny the diligence of many emperors which Millar (1967, 9ff.) postulates; no doubt complex or unprecedented issues of private law would occasion the personal involvement of the emperor, as would important public law decisions, and this explains the personal tone of some of the preserved rescripts.

This leads on to the issue of the exact role of the jurists after the Augustan period. If legal advice and instruction came increasingly to be given by the emperor and his staff, what place was there for the advice even of the 'approved' jurists? In fact, the wealth of legal literature produced in the second and third centuries clearly indicates that juristic activity, far from being rendered superfluous, then reached a peak, the so-called Classical period of Roman law. Since most emperors and many of the members of the administration responsible for the drawing up of rescripts lacked legal training, the jurists would have had an advisory part to play within the rescript system. They exercised influence over the law by means of their prolific writings which were, no doubt, consulted by the emperor and his staff. Some also submitted advice as members of the emperor's *consilium*.

The excerpts from the juristic commentaries preserved in Justinian's *Digest* provide some impression of the vast works produced by many jurists of the classical period. General treatises on the civil and criminal law were written, as well as commentaries on the edict and on important statutes. Some jurists composed legal textbooks, the most notable being the *Institutes* of Gaius from the second century AD, a large portion of which has been preserved. The value of Justinian's codification for the preservation of the works of the classical jurists is enormous, in spite of the extent of interpolation sometimes suspected. Justinian's codifiers were ordered to bring the chosen juristic excerpts into line with the law of the day and the consequent editorial activity has caused some scholars to view much of the content of the *Digest* and the *Code* with scepticism. But the esteem in which the classical jurists were clearly held in the time of

Justinian and the prestige associated with the rescripts of deified emperors surely precludes the large-scale interpolation which some have postulated. This is not to deny that the state of some texts of the *Code* and *Digest* suggests that they have indeed been tampered with or corrupted. Perhaps more significant is the fact that the excerpts have been taken from their contexts by the codifiers and placed in the appropriate chapters of the collections; this inevitably causes problems of interpretation. But it does not affect the general view of the work of the classical jurists who are notorious for their assiduous activity and obsession with detail. Their commentaries on the interpretation and application of the law include discussion of every kind of legal case and circumstance, both real and imaginary. They also provide very specific definitions of words and phrases relevant to the law.

The jurists were by no means always in agreement; conflicting views on many issues are revealed by the *Digest* excerpts. Such conflicts are to some extent to be explained in terms of two main schools of jurists, the Proculians and Sabinians, whose existence, according to Pomponius, went back to two jurists of the Augustan period, Labeo and Capito, although it is from later jurists that the names of the schools derive. A much discussed passage of Gaius cites a rescript of Hadrian which laid down that an opinion held by all of the 'authorized' jurists should have the force of law, but that in the case of a disagreement, a judge might choose whom to follow. However, the existence of disagreements must have been a contributing factor to the stream of petitions for rulings from the emperor, and there is no doubt a link between the growth of the rescript system and the disappearance of the two schools within a century.

In spite of the astonishing volume of literature produced by the jurists of the second and third centuries, the surviving representation of this literature suggests that the contribution of these jurists was more in terms of consolidation than innovation. This is not surprising, if the complexity and sophistication of Roman law by the end of the Republic is considered. In addition, independent activity by the jurists can hardly have been encouraged by the successors of Augustus who continued his policy of maintaining a close association between the best legal minds and the emperor. This association culminated in the nature of juristic activity in the late empire which seems to have been largely confined to participation in the rescript system, now dominating the formulation and application of the law. Instead of producing treatises and commentaries, jurists collected and edited imperial constitutions. Thus there is evidence of two collections of constitutions made during the reign of Diocletian, the Gregorian and

Hermogenian codes. These *Codes* are generally thought to have been unofficial collections, unlike the later Theodosian *Code* compiled in AD 429 and the famous *Code* of Justinian for which the earlier codes no doubt provided material.

The activity of the classical jurists illustrates the richness of written law in the Roman legal system which distinguishes it from every other, and which helps to explain why custom and precedent did not play a very significant part in the formulation of the law. It also explains why it has been comparatively easy for the Roman system to be adopted as the basis for so many modern systems of law.

The overall trend under the Empire, therefore, was a growing monopoly over law-making by the emperor, at least in name. The importance of the emperor's influence on the law should have been further advanced by the spread of the Roman citizenship to an increasing number of provincials, culminating as it did in the virtually universal grant of citizenship in AD 212 by the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of the Emperor Caracalla. The distinction between the *ius civile*, the law applying only to Roman citizens, and the *ius gentium*, the law applying to Romans and non-Romans, was now, in theory, obsolete, and the rules of Roman law should have been applicable to every area of the Empire and to every inhabitant. Thus rulings made by the emperor were becoming applicable to an ever-increasing number of Roman citizens. In practice, however, the application of the rules of Roman law to people in distant and culturally distinct parts of the Empire, who had become accustomed to local systems, was no simple achievement. Roman officials in the provinces could not deal with every legal case which arose, and therefore needed the co-operation of local officials who would, at least initially, have been ignorant of the Roman system. A text of Gaius provides an example of local custom being upheld in a matter of private law, and considering the chaos and uncertainty of the years between the death of Severus Alexander in AD 235 and the accession of Diocletian in 284, it is hardly likely that much progress could have been made in enforcing adherence to the rules of Roman law throughout the provinces. Some scholars believe that, following the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, the character of Roman law changed as it became infused with elements of Greek law. The examples cited in favour of this view, are, however, fairly few in number and tend to belong to the post-Diocletianic period, when the seat of the emperor had become firmly established in the eastern Empire. Under Diocletian, a reorganization of the provincial system suggests a desire for improved organization and centralization, and the content of many of his constitutions reveals a strong assertion of the

traditional principles of Roman law. Clearly there were still enormous practical difficulties involved in achieving Empire-wide application of the principles of Roman law, but the enactments of the later emperors such as Diocletian must nevertheless have had a far-reaching influence. The power and prestige of the later emperors is illustrated by the fact that from the time of Constantine they no longer made rulings only in response to requests, but also began to issue *leges generales* which were more directly legislative.

There were, therefore, considerable developments in the role of the emperor as a law-maker between the Augustan period and the fourth century. Augustus may be seen to be feeling his way, exploiting all the existing channels and institutions, and establishing a place for himself within them. As a result, the traditional channels soon either became obsolete or were transformed, as the prestige of the emperors enabled them to monopolize the contribution traditionally made to the development of the law by magistrates and jurists. It is important, however, to set against this the use made by the emperors of assistants, and also the complex system of private law already established by the end of the Republic. This was not radically altered by the emperors whose rescripts so often restated traditional principles of private law.

The emperor as judge

Reference has already been made to Cicero's list of the republican sources of law in which is included that of previous judgments. There was, in fact, no established rule of precedent in Roman law, and there are few references to previous judgments in the arguments of the jurists. Nevertheless, Cicero recognized that precedent, if not binding, was influential. Thus the role of the emperor as a judge may be seen as yet another means by which he established himself firmly within the legal system and built up prestige and influence. This section is designed to trace this role and to examine its implications for the civil and criminal courts under the empire.

As in the case of the formulation of law, the history of the courts in the Republic is characterized by the tendency for institutions and processes to develop or to be supplemented as the need arose. Thus the early *legis actio* system of the civil courts, whereby a very limited number of rigidly defined actions could be granted, was gradually superseded by the formulary system whereby the praetor, or other magistrate, having made the usual

preliminary enquiry into a case between two parties, would submit a set form of words (*formula*) to a judge, who would make a decision: the variety of different *formulae* which could be used made this system more flexible. This tendency may also be seen in the development of criminal jurisdiction. In the early days of the Republic, many offences which are now regarded as crimes gave rise to civil actions, and it was only very gradually that certain offenders came to be brought to law by the state rather than by the injured party. By the second century BC, magistrates, particularly the praetors, became responsible for the punishment of certain crimes committed within their jurisdiction. In the late Republic, and especially following the legislation of Sulla, there also appeared permanent jury courts (*quaestiones*) for the trial of certain, largely upper-class, crimes such as extortion by officials in the provinces, treason, bribery, embezzlement and forgery. Even at this stage, the offences of assault and theft continued to be handled by the civil courts. Any citizen, not just the injured party, could initiate a prosecution before the *quaestiones* and these were presided over by praetors.

What is interesting about the important part played by praetors in jurisdiction in the Republic is the fact that they were annual magistrates who possessed no particular legal training. The same applied to the other magistrates who were involved in presiding over courts, and to the judges appointed by these magistrates in civil cases. Against this must be set the availability to such men of the advice of jurists who were legal experts and, more importantly, the great interest that the Romans generally took in law and the courts which must have resulted in a fair degree of knowledge.

Given that Augustus was supposed to be working within the republican framework, the question arises of the basis of his right to investigate civil suits and to preside over criminal courts. He did not claim to possess the rights of a praetor, the most important judicial magistrate of the Republic. He did, however, possess *imperium* in the provinces assigned to him, and hence, just as he could issue edicts relating to the affairs of these areas, so he possessed the right (which he mostly delegated to legates) to try cases arising in them. This meant that Roman citizens dissatisfied with judgments passed by his representatives could appeal to him, just as they had appealed to an assembly of the people at Rome when dissatisfied with the judgments of magistrates during the Republic. The privilege of appeal seems also to have extended to citizens in senatorial provinces, perhaps on account of Augustus' *mains imperium*, that is, an *imperium* superior to that of other provincial governors. It is more difficult to explain the basis of his right to judge cases in Rome and Italy. Some scholars would explain this in terms

of his possession of consular *imperium*, and Kunkel (1966, 68) suggests that his *tribunicia potestas* gave to him a certain competence. But apart from the uncertainty over whether or not he did possess consular *imperium*, neither the rights associated with a consul nor a tribune can explain his competence to judge criminal cases which should have come before inappellable *quaestiones*. It is equally difficult to explain his competence to investigate civil suits. The only conclusion is that there is a parallel here with the gradual extension, by virtue of his *auctoritas*, of the right of issuing edicts relating to his provinces into a more general right. He did not formally claim a general right of presiding over civil and criminal cases in Rome and Italy, nor is there evidence of such being granted to him, but the fact that he did investigate and judge at Rome suggests that he simply appropriated the right. In other words, he gradually engineered a role for himself within the courts which, like his law-making role, must have undermined the activities of others who were entitled to preside over courts as holders of magistracies.

Dio provides an anecdote which portrays Augustus sitting in judgment, and Maecenas struggling through the crowd in an attempt to prevent him from passing a series of death sentences. Suetonius also provides some glimpses of Augustus sitting as a judge, including an interesting one, which shows him presiding over a case of a forged will. If the story is to be taken seriously, not only was Augustus encroaching on the jurisdiction of the standing court responsible for such a case, but he also created a precedent of some significance by giving to the members of his court the opportunity not only of acquitting or condemning, but also of excusing those witnesses who had acted in ignorance. This action by Augustus illustrates his great interest in the procedure of the courts, and other measures attributed to him suggest that there were many ways, apart from sitting as a judge, in which he could exert influence over them.

In addition, Augustus was able to exercise influence over trials through the legates who represented him in his provinces. Not only were these men answerable to him, but they did not change every year like senatorial governors. He furthermore replaced the rather inadequate republican policing system with a highly-organized police force and fire-brigade, the *vigiles*, headed by a prefect. There was also a prefect in charge of the praetorian guard, the elite corps of soldiers stationed in the city of Rome, and a prefect of the city who was originally the emperor's deputy at Rome during his absences, and courts later grew up under the presidency of these officials. In the sphere of civil jurisdiction, there was considerable continuity. The existing courts remained, including that of the *centumviri*

which was concerned with claims regarding inheritance.

What is striking about Augustus' activities relating to the courts is the extent of his interference in a system which had formerly developed in a typically haphazard and *ad hoc* manner. Thus by the end of his reign, the civil and criminal courts of Rome and the provinces had become more controlled and uniform, and the policing system at Rome had become closely associated with the emperor. It is not difficult to see parallels here with his achievements in the system of law-making and of private law.

Augustus' assumption of judicial rights created a precedent which made it easy for subsequent emperors to involve themselves in judging cases. The fact that one man could at the same time be the foremost law-maker and the foremost judge provides a reflection of a unique and fascinating characteristic of the Roman legal system. Honoré has carried out an extensive study of the activities of the individual emperors in the judicial sphere, and has concluded that the extent of their involvement depended on their own personalities; some were diligent, others lazy (Honoré, 1981, 3). The composition of the emperor's court must have varied, since he judged cases while on his travels as well as at Rome. He would always have had a large entourage wherever he happened to be, and the friends and prominent men who made up his court must have overlapped considerably with the members of his advisory *consilium*. There would, no doubt, have often been jurists in the emperor's court, and there is evidence to suggest that Hadrian added to the members of his court the secretaries concerned with the issuing of imperial constitutions. It was clearly inconceivable for the emperor to judge cases without consultation, and Suetonius describes how Nero felt the need to make a pretence of accepting the majority decision of the members of his court by asking for their opinions to be handed to him in writing and then announcing the result himself. However, the principle of consultation and collaboration was based on accepted practice, as well as on the need of the emperors for advice, rather than on a strictly legal requirement, and it was clearly the role of the emperor which was crucial.

Furthermore, it has already been observed that decrees, that is decisions made by the emperor in his role as a judge, were included in the category of imperial constitutions which the classical jurists regarded as legally binding. By means of these decrees and of rescripts issued on behalf of those involved in law-suits, the emperor was able to influence decisions made in courts other than his own. In the third century, the jurist Paul issued a collection of imperial decrees and there is a fair number of references in the *Digest* excerpts to decrees of Septimius Severus.

The court of the emperor was not the only new court to be established

under the Principate. The development of the jurisdiction of the prefects has been mentioned; that of the urban prefect was criminal, while that of the praetorian prefect was military and civil. The cases tried by the senate under the presidency of the consuls seem to have mostly involved members of its own order. The existence of such courts had various results. First, it brought about a partial demise of the formulary system in civil suits; it was more convenient and appropriate for an important official, and especially for the emperor, to conduct an entire case himself rather than making an enquiry and then submitting the case to another party for judgment. Second, the trial of criminal cases in such courts led to the gradual disappearance of the *quaestiones*, the standing criminal courts. Third, the right enjoyed by those of a certain social status to be tried before a particular special court (only those of high rank, for example, would have been privileged to appear before the emperor), promoted a system of legal privilege linked with social status (see Garnsey, 1970). Fourth, those officials who presided over special courts were closely linked with the emperor. Thus, while the number of cases which he could judge personally was obviously limited, he was able to delegate to officials both at Rome and in the provinces over whom he could exercise control.

The trends which may be discerned in the first three centuries AD culminated in the fourth century ([Chapter 17](#)). Law-making and jurisdiction became more and more bureaucratized: the system of imperial constitutions continued to grow in importance and in organization, and judges became synonymous with imperial officials. In addition, the influence of Christianity can be seen in the nature of many of the imperial enactments from Constantine onwards. This may all be far removed from the situation under the Republic. However, it is important to remember that, in spite of the passage of four centuries which saw major political and social developments, many of the great and fundamental principles of Roman law which had been established under the Republic remained unchanged.

• GOVERNMENT •
• AND • ADMINISTRATION •
• IN • THE • LATE • EMPIRE •
• (TO • AD 476)

J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz

When Diocletian and Constantine rebuilt the structure of the Empire shattered by the events of the third century they were faced with many problems that had not existed during the Principate (Rostovtzeff, 1957; Cook, Adcock *et al.*, 1939; Walser and Pekáry, 1962; Alföldy, 1979, 139–64). The Empire was now under more or less continuous attack, often at more than one frontier at a time. The needs of defence impelled the government to make much greater and inevitably more unpopular demands on the manpower and resources of the Empire than ever before. At the same time it had lost cohesion. The army, once the great romanizer, had become regionalized, and the soldiers' concern for their native province, and often their attachment to particular generals had become stronger than their loyalty to the Empire as a whole. The economic ties linking frontier areas with the central provinces had grown weaker as the provinces had become self-sufficient in many of the items that they had previously imported from Mediterranean areas. There was thus less need for traders and shippers. The need had been further reduced by the fact that armies and civil servants had come to be paid in produce, raised and distributed by compulsory transport duties (MacMullen, 1976, 173ff.; Hopkins, 1980, 106 and 123–5). As the economy had become more localized the Roman way of life had lost some of its appeal. Even under the most favourable conditions romanization ceased to advance; in the north-western provinces it went into retreat.

From the point of view of administration the most harmful aspect was the weakening of city organization in Britain and parts of Spain and Gaul as well as the Balkan provinces. By leaving most administrative tasks to city authorities the Empire had been able to manage with a very small staff of officials of its own. This would no longer be possible after the third century. Another damaging development was that the patriotic pride of the ruling and privileged Roman nation which had once held together the empire had been diluted out of existence with the conferment of citizenship on all free inhabitants of the empire by Caracalla (AD 212). More damaging still, privilege of citizenship had been progressively replaced by privilege of class, the division of the inhabitants of the empire into *honestiores* (soldiers, decurions, equestrians and senators) and *humiliores* (everybody else, including the peasants), with the inevitable long term result that those without privilege became completely alienated from the Empire (Garnsey, 1970; de Ste Croix, 1981, 474ff.).

The circumstances required a thorough reform of the administration. Diocletian, a very great emperor, seems to have grasped the scale of the problem quite early in his reign, and the reforms introduced by him and carried further in some important respects by Constantine, succeeded in giving the Empire a second lease of life. Diocletian saw that the Empire would henceforth require more than one emperor, and that the administration would have to become much more active at provincial level. He therefore established a tetrarchy of two senior emperors (*Augusti*) and two junior partners (*Caesars*), and he subdivided almost all the provinces of the Empire, doubling their number to around a hundred. The doubling of provincial governors caused a problem of supervision, which he solved by creating an intermediate unit of administration between court and province: the diocese. The system may have been established by 293 (Barnes, 1982, 20–35, 224–5; cf also Jones, 1954 otherwise Noetlich, 1982). The three-tiered structure of administration remained intact until the end of the Roman Empire in the West, and in the East into the seventh century.

The tetrarchic system did not last, but from the reign of Diocletian to the deposition of the last western emperor in 476 there were relatively few years when there was only one emperor. After the death of Constantine there were normally two or three. When Theodosius I died in 395 he was for practical purposes the sole ruler, but then the Empire was divided between his sons Arcadius and Honorius, never again to be united under a single monarch. Nevertheless in law, all emperors (*Augusti* and any *Caesars*) continued to form a college which jointly ruled an undivided Empire. Imperial constitutions were issued in the names of all emperors.

One coinage circulated over the whole Empire. The inhabitants enjoyed one citizenship. For most of the fourth century there was one elite which provided officials for all the Empire. Nevertheless east and west were growing apart. The development accelerated as Constantinople grew into a second Rome, and the real capital of the east (Dagron, 1974). After 395 east and west were for practical purposes separate realms, linked but also divided by their past history.

A new feature of the fully developed system of the Late Empire was the separation of military (Part 3, Chapter 7) and civil administration. Under the Principate a senator was thought equally capable of civil government and military command, and the governorships of important provinces combined both types of administration. Not so under the Late Empire, although the transition was gradual. We hear of a number of dukes in charge of parts of frontier armies under Diocletian, but in many frontier provinces the governor was still in command of the troops (Seston, 1946, 313–19). The praetorian prefect continued to act as commander-in-chief (under the emperor), and a vicar might deputize for the prefect in his military as well as his civil capacity. The separation was completed at the earliest by Constantine. He created a permanent mobile field army commanded by a master of the infantry (*magister peditum*) and a master of the cavalry (*magister equitum*). It was probably also in his reign that the frontier units still under the control of governors were placed under dukes (van Berchem, 1952, 100–5). By the 360s the masters of the soldiers had become the superiors of the dukes of the frontier armies. The praetorian prefects had lost all military authority and the two hierarchies were united only in the person of the emperor. The two branches of the administration grew entirely distinct. The commanders had purely military careers, the governors no military experience whatsoever. Besides a growing proportion of the generals and of their troops was of barbarian origin (Demandt, 1980), with the result that some of the most important positions came to be held by men born outside the Empire. The new system had advantages. Armies were commanded by experts. A general had no authority over the departments that paid and supplied his troops, and this made rebellion more difficult. But the division also involved risk of conflict between the civil and military branches of government.

The structure of the developed system was something like this. The emperor was head of state and source of all authority. His unique position was proclaimed by increasingly elaborate protocol and ceremony. For much of the fourth century emperors travelled from crisis-spot to crisis-spot, and spent longer periods of time at large cities with easy access to

frontier areas, Antioch, Nicomedia, Naissus, Serdica, Sirmium, Trier. Court and central administration travelled with the emperor. Eventually this proved intolerably inconvenient, and there was a return to a permanent capital. By 395 Constantinople was the permanent imperial residence in the east. In the west this development was never completed, but Trier, Milan and especially Ravenna came near to becoming capitals at different times.

The court (*comitatus*) consisted of the officials and attendants of the emperor's household (*sacrum cubiculum*), his advisers (*consistorium*), the confidential shorthand writers who took down the discussions and decisions of the *consistorium*, and might be sent out to see their enforcement in the provinces (*notarii*), and last but not least the principal officers of state with their office staffs. Chief of these was the praetorian prefect. Although he had lost his military command he remained responsible for the feeding and supplying of the army, and since troops, like all other imperial employees, were paid most of their wages in kind, he was in fact the principal finance-officer of the Empire. He was also the superior of all provincial governors, and had great influence over appointments. A wide range of laws concerning provincial government was addressed to him, often because the laws had been promulgated in response to the prefect's request. As deputy of the emperor the praetorian prefect exercised appellate jurisdiction over the whole Empire. The prefect might fairly be described as the premier-minister of his part of the Empire.

Second in importance among the great officers was the *magister officiorum*, an office which was split from the praetorian prefecture by Constantine. The creation of this post was a consequence of the great numerical growth of the central administration for he was the principal administrative official – as it were the registrar – of the court. The master of the offices was head of the secretarial departments (*scrinia*) which had developed out of the offices staffed by freedmen under the early principate. He was also responsible for the public post, which he supervised by means of his own corps of inspectors the *agentes in rebus*. Through the same *agents*, whose activities were far from secret, he received information from all over the Empire. Since *agentes in rebus* finished their career as head of the offices (*official*) of praetorian prefects and other important officers, the *magister officiorum* was able to obtain information how these officers conducted their administration, and to pass on his knowledge to the emperor. The *magister officiorum* was in at least administrative command of the palace guards (*scholae palatinae*). The *magister officiorum* was also concerned with the reception of ambassadors, and from time to time might be sent on an embassy himself. He was often the official chosen to

represent the emperor at church councils. The nature of his responsibilities made it essential that the *magister officiorum* should be a man whom the emperor, or whoever else directed policy, could trust absolutely. They were often 'new men'.

Two other officers of the *comitatus*, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, and the *comes rei privatae*, were concerned with finance. The former was responsible for gold and silver mines, mints, and taxes levied in precious metals. In other words his sphere was the collection, production and expenditure of money. Owing to the extent of the state natural economy, controlled by the praetorian prefect, he did not have the importance of a modern chancellor of the exchequer but the *stipendium*, paid in money, and above all the donatives given on imperial anniversaries still played an essential part in maintaining morale and loyalty of the army. By depriving his Caesar Julian of a *comes sacrarum largitionum*, Constantius, the senior emperor, hoped to prevent the development of dangerously close ties between Julian and his troops. The *comes rei privatae* was responsible for the administration of the emperor's estates. His officials collected rents, and claimed properties forfeited to the emperor, as for instance the estates of men found guilty of treason. The emperor's private estates were extensive, and their income enabled an emperor to reward members of the *comitatus* and others with the generosity that was expected of him. The last of the great civil officers was the *quaestor*. He was the direct superior of the secretarial departments (*scrinia*) who were responsible for dealing with the vast mass of petitions, consultations and appeals addressed to the emperor. The *quaestor* was also responsible for the drafting of imperial constitutions. In addition to the civilian officials there were the military members of the *comitatus*, above all the *magistri militum praesentales* commanding the field army units accompanying the emperor, and the two *comites domesticorum* who were in charge of the corps of officer cadets, the *domestici et protectores*.

The great civil officers of the *comitatus* represented each of the principal concerns of a Roman emperor: the raising and spending of taxes to supply and pay army and civil service, the making of law and the administration of justice, and the answering of a vast mass of miscellaneous requests for assistance by individuals, corporations, cities and provinces. The military officers represented the fact that for most of the fourth, but not the fifth century, the emperor was active commander in chief of fighting armies and that even when he ceased to be that he had to maintain a special relationship with the officer corps, symbolized by the ceremony of the adoration of the sacred purple. Towards the end of the fourth century the

total civilian strength of the court was around 3,000. The palace guards (*scholae*) amounted to as many men again. The total of 6,000 does not of course include the units of the field army attached to the emperor (*palatine*).

At diocesan level the administration was represented by vicars (the diocese of Oriens being governed by a *comes*, and Egypt by a *praefectus Augustalis*). These had at their disposal an office staff of around 300, divided between judicial and financial departments. Originally, the deputy praetorial 'prefects' might have some military function too, but from the reign of Constantine onwards their main duties were the distribution of levies and the hearing of appeals. The departments of the *sacra largitio* and the *res private* also had officials at diocesan level. Up to a point vicars were the superiors of the provincial governors, but orders were often passed directly to governors from the *comitatus*. Provincial governors and citizens of the provinces in their turn often by-passed the vicar, to communicate with the *comitatus* directly.

The governors of eventually about 119 provinces, (de Ste Croix, 1981, 491) had *official* around 100 strong (the proconsuls had a larger staff), of basically the same structure as those of the higher officials, being made up of three sections: judicial, financial and sub-clerical. The first two represented a governor's principal activities: jurisdiction and taxation. The governor's court had replaced local courts for most kinds of case, civil or criminal. The governor spent much of his time travelling from assizes to assizes, and much of the rest supervising the collection of taxes. He would normally take a very active role in the administration of cities. He was a busy man, and access to him was likely to be slow and expensive. Constantine authorized an alternative source of jurisdiction in civil disputes: the court of the Christian bishop (Waldstein, 1976).

The total number of active civil servants in the Late Empire has been estimated at around 30,000 (Jones, 1964, 1057). This is a very modest figure for the administration of so vast an Empire. It must however be remembered that in addition to the salaried civil service there was a large number of unpaid but nevertheless privileged supernumeraries and honorary office holders. The creation of this large army of active and inactive civil servants certainly made a very great change compared with the administration of the principate, and one which would have far-reaching consequences.

Members of administration all belonged to the legally privileged class of *honestiores* and all but the humblest had the rank of soldiers. Their service was known as *militia*. They wore the military belt (*cingulum militia*), and

like soldiers they were paid in rations (*annona*). The military organization of the civil service (MacMullen, 1963, 162ff.) was partly a consequence of the filling of civilian office staffs with men seconded from the army (Jones, 1949), partly of the fact that civil administration as a career service for citizens had not existed during the Republic and early Empire. As it gradually came into existence it was shaped on the only available model, the army. Under the early emperors the office work of the Empire was done by imperial freedmen. In the course of time these were replaced from the top downwards by knights (*equites*) and humbler freeborn citizens. Nevertheless as late as the reign of Diocletian freedmen still seem to have played a significant role. It was left to Constantine to grant military privileges and status to departments still staffed by freedmen. In the emperor's private household freedmen of course continued to be employed, and the chamberlains (*cubicularii*), eunuchs who had originated as slaves bought in Persia, might exercise great influence without corresponding responsibility.

The administration of the Late Empire was still far from being manned entirely with career civil servants. In fact all the executive posts, magistracies and governorships of the old type as well as the headships of the central departments continued to be filled by amateurs, of high social status who in the course of their lives normally held only a small number of posts, and those only for a relatively short time (p. 461 below). But these holders of high office were assisted and served by departments staffed entirely by professionals, who were employed by the state until they formally retired like soldiers (*honesta missio*), after spending their working lives advancing slowly from grade to grade. The successful functioning of the service depended on the professional knowledge and experience of the more senior of these men. John Lydus, an official of the praetorian prefecture of the east in the reign of Justinian, has preserved the outlook of such a man in his book on the magistrates of the Roman people (*De Magistratibus Populi Romani*), which has been analysed and translated in Carney (1971). While career civil servants often found themselves in positions of power *vis-à-vis* the public, they were poorly paid, on average around 4 *solidi* a year (or its equivalent in kind) or less. In wages most of them were probably worse off than private soldiers. But there was a very wide gap between the average salary and the salaries of the highest paid heads of the various offices. Roman civil servants (particularly the senior men) were however in a position greatly to increase their earnings by charging the public for services such as access to the governor, completion of legal documents, enforcement of the orders of a court, or even the paper

used in making court records. Tax collectors had to be paid fees. Earnings were highest in the central departments. Not only were the litigants that used the courts of the capital wealthy, and the amounts at stake large, but officials were also in a position to charge for imperial benefits such as commissions in the army, codicils of real or honorary rank, privileges, immunities, or laws favouring special interests which poured out from the *comitatus*. Fees (*sportulae*) were so much part of the accepted emolument that the government produced tables of the amounts that might be legally charged, and were no doubt regularly exceeded. In his first year of service in the prefecture of the east John Lydus earned 1,000 *solidi* in fees, more than thirty times his salary.

Salaries of officials were supplemented by privilege of status. As *honestiores* all holders of *militia* were immune from the more savage punishments. Members of the central departments were exempt from normal jurisdiction, and could claim to have their cases tried by their head of department (*praescriptio fori*). This privilege might also be claimed by sinecure holders of official positions. The eastern government in the fifth century attempted to limit the abuse. In ceremonial precedence even the humblest officials, the office staff of provincial governors (*cohortalini*) were at least the equals, often the superiors, of city-councillors, and they were of course exempt from the expensive and troublesome duties which city-councillors were obliged to perform. As a result service in even a provincial office might seem attractive to a decurion – if he had reason to believe that he might be able to circumvent the legislation which tied him and his children to the service of his local *curia*. Nevertheless the *cohortalini* were the humblest of officials, and their low pay and slow promotion to the posts of high pay and perquisites, and not least the expensive transport duty (*primipili pastus*) which was required of the officials who retired with the rank of *primipilaris*, made service in a provincial office unpopular with those who saw prospects of entering central departments. The government responded characteristically by making service compulsory and hereditary.

As has been shown earlier the clerks and accountants of the career civil service continued to be directed by heads of department who were amateurs as far as departmental work was concerned. These holders of *dignitates* or *honores* were appointed with codicils issued by the *primicerius notariorum*. The average term of office was less than two years, and most men only held one or two such posts in their lives. A majority seem to have been content with just one post. A small number of individuals, ambitious to reach top posts like that of praetorian prefect or master of the offices

held a succession of posts. It is clear that there was tremendous pressure to obtain *honores*. It was perhaps partly a matter of pay. The fifty *annonae* and fifty *capitus* of the Augustan prefect of Egypt in the reign of Justinian will have amounted to 100 times the wages of his humble clerks, while the 100 lbs of gold of the praetorian prefect of Africa must have amounted to something like 1,800 times as much. Even so Justinian's prefect of Africa earned less than half the salary of the proconsul of Africa under the principate (1,000,000 *sesterces* = 220 lbs of gold). Salaries would of course be supplemented by perquisites of office. Not all of this was pure profit. The holder of the dignity will have paid a very large sum for it either to a patron for his support (*suffragium*), or later to the emperor himself or to another official to whom the emperor had turned over the right to make the appointment. Perhaps the greatest attraction of imperial *honores* was the rank conferred by them, which raised the ex-official above his former peers in civic society and which might, with a little luck, provide a means of avoiding curial duties not only for the man himself but also for his descendants. During the fourth century rank suffered from inflation comparable to that of the currency. More and more posts came to entitle their holder first to simple senatorial rank (*clarissimus*) and then to its higher grades (*spectabilis*, *illustris*). Senatorial rank also came to be awarded honorifically to men retiring from leading places in palatine offices, or to private individuals in return for miscellaneous services, or just because they had influential patrons, or because they had paid for the honour. No doubt the elaborate rules of precedence and seniority helped to oil the working of the administrative machinery. Not the least important function of rank was to integrate the otherwise completely separate hierarchies of military and civil administration. Another effect was to demonstrate on public occasions that position derived from proximity to the emperor excelled all other sources of social distinction.

The most important function of the bureaucracy was to supervise the collection of the taxes out of which soldiers and civil servants themselves were paid. The exercise through which the annual list of demands (*indictio*) was prepared was a bureaucratic operation of a size without parallel in the early Empire. Annual returns from the various departments, military and civilian, were passed up the hierarchy to the praetorian prefecture where the officials would calculate how much corn, or clothing, or whatever would be required by government employees in different areas, and would then proceed to distribute the burden as equally as practicable between dioceses and provinces. At provincial level the burden was divided between cities who were told not only how much they would have to provide but

also where to transport it. In the city, administration passed out of the hands of paid civil servants into those of city councillors, who were not only unpaid, but also held collective liability for deficits, and who might be required to transport the supplies for great distances at their own cost (e.g. in Egypt from Hermopolis to Syene, 370 miles by river). Supervision of the magazines where the product of taxation was stored and the making of payments to imperial employees, whether in kind or in money equivalents, were also curial duties. The operation might be profitable, particularly if the decurions were men of influence, but it also involved the risk of extremely unpleasant consequences. A decurion who failed to collect the amount due might suffer savage corporal punishment. Alternatively – or even additionally – he might be compelled to sell his property to make up the deficit (Jones, 1964, 951–62).

Assessment of taxes was based on an empire-wide census of land and population which was revised every twelve years. According to Jones's view (Jones, 1957) the taxable value of land over most of the Empire was assessed in *iuga*. The *iugum* was a notional unit, like our rateable value, which in some provinces, e.g. Syria, took into account the quality of land and the use to which it was put, but more often did not. The corresponding unit for assessing the tax on population was the 'head' (*caput*). The total value for tax purposes of a piece of land was obtained by adding *iuga* and *capita* together. The annual tax liability was then stated as so much of each item per *iugum* or *caput*. Empire-wide uniformity was not achieved. In Asia (unlike Syria) the *iugum* took into account use – but not quality of land. In Italy the unit was the *millena*, and in Africa the *centuria*, both simple units of area. In Gaul, confusingly, a unit called *caput* seems to have been used to assess liability for land tax. The value of the *caput* too seems to have varied regionally. Some of this confusing variety of terms may be due to the coexistence of imperial units, used by the central administration, and local units used in the provinces. It may be that the annual indiction was announced in standard *iuga* and *capita* by the prefecture but that this was translated into local units when the burden was distributed at diocesan or provincial level. The above account based on Jones is almost certainly oversimplified. It has been shown that Jones's account of a single *iugatiocapitatio* tax seems to apply fully only to the diocese of Asia. In most areas a poll tax charged per head of the male population seems to have been quite separate from the land-tax (MacMullen, 1976, 129–52; Chastagnol, 1979; also 1982, 364ff.; Cerati, 1975).

The principal tax after being collected in kind, was paid out in salaries also assessed in kind, namely in rations (*annonae*) and fodder allowances

(*capitus*). For employees whose salaries exceeded what they needed for immediate subsistence this system was intolerably clumsy. There is no doubt that from the beginning salary earners bargained with the curial storekeepers to draw their emolument in money rather than kind. Officials and soldiers abused their position to extort favourable prices. This led to a succession of laws forbidding or regulating commutation (*adaeratio*) in particular circumstances. But while this did not prevent a great deal of commutation, the principle that the main revenue (*annona*) should be both collected and paid out in kind remained intact for a long time. The conversion of tax payments into payments in gold was only completed in 424 in the west. In the east it was left to Anastasius to convert the bulk of the land tax (except for supplies needed to feed the army) into gold. Salaries continued to be stated (if not paid) in *annonae* and *capitus* for much longer. The fact that *adaeratio* was completed earlier in the economically weaker west shows that the natural economy of the state was maintained not because of economic weakness but because it was in the interest of the administration and its officials: the stronger administration maintained it longer.

But even while its principal revenue was in produce the government needed an income in precious metal. This was provided in part by the 'oluntary' contributions of *curiales* (*aurum coronarium*) and senators (*aurum oblativum*) on the occasions of imperial celebration or anniversaries. Silver and gold (later only gold) were also produced by the tax on shopkeepers, craftsmen and merchants (*collatio lustralis*) which caused great hardship among those liable when the tax was collected at five-yearly intervals. The *sacra largitio* also received some gold revenue from the land-tax, although its share was much smaller than the prefect's revenue in kind. In addition the *largitio* seems to have obtained gold by buying-in *solidi* with debased *denarii*. The fact that a large part of the income of the *sacra largitio* arrived in five-yearly intervals suggests that the government's need for gold was cyclical also, i.e. that its main use was to pay the five *solidi* per soldier at the accession of an emperor, and subsequently at the quinquennial anniversaries of the accession.

The administrative system has been described as if it had sprung up fully grown, and remained more or less unchanged thereafter. In fact like all human institutions it was subject to evolution. The separation of military and civil administration was a gradual process completed under Constantine. The assimilation of the great offices of the court into the same career structure as the provincial governorships and other traditional honours, and the consequent integration of the two privileged groups, the

senatorial and equestrian orders, into a single hierarchically graded imperial aristocracy of office, was completed under the sons of Constantine (Vogler, 1979). Under Diocletian and Constantine there had probably been as many praetorian prefects as emperors, and each had accompanied his emperor on his travels. By the second half of the fourth century they had become heads of permanent administrative subdivisions of the Empire. This in a sense preserved the tripartite division of the Empire after the death of Constantine, the prefecture of the east corresponding to the Empire of Constantius, the prefecture of Italy, Illyricum and Africa to that of Constans and the prefecture of the Gauls, which included Britain and Spain, to the short-lived Empire of Constantine II. When the Empire was divided into eastern and western halves after the death of Jovian and again after the death of Theodosius I the prefecture of the east (*Oriens*) in effect became the Eastern Empire for which it provided the administrative substructure. After 395 the Eastern Empire included most of the Balkans which were organized as a second eastern prefecture of Illyricum. But the prefecture of *Oriens* remained the core of the administration. The fact that it was essentially based on a single prefecture, was one of the factors which gave the Eastern Empire a cohesion not possessed by the west. In the course of the fourth century there developed a tendency, natural in view of the language situation, to appoint easterners to posts in the east, and this was reinforced by the creation in the reign of Constantius of a senate at Constantinople on the model of the Roman senate. The complete hellenization of the eastern administration was delayed when Theodosius I became emperor and brought many westerners into the government of the east. After his death the development resumed, and the new aristocracy of Constantinople was determined that they would not again be subject to the west. When Stilicho the powerful western *magister peditum praesentalis* tried to become the guardian and principal adviser of the eastern emperor also, the ensuing conflict was most damaging to the empire as a whole, and particularly to its western half in its struggles with the Visigoths under Alaric.

The west was itself suffering from regional separatism. For some ten years after 368 Trier had been the residence of the praetorian prefect of the Gauls and of a western emperor almost continuously. This period saw the consolidation of a Gallic aristocracy. The senatorial aristocracy of Gaul did not cease to think of themselves as Romans, but they did come to feel, justifiably, that the defence of Gaul was being neglected by the government in Italy, and on several occasions supported usurpers who could be expected to do more for the protection of their home country. At the same

time posts in the imperial administration of Gaul came to be held almost exclusively by Gallic senators, while the administration of Italy was nearly monopolized by Italians.

The administration of the Late Empire was established in the face of terrible difficulties. It was set up rapidly in response to crisis in a society which lacked bureaucratic traditions. All action was extremely slow. An ordinary law suit might take several years. A law issued at Milan might reach Rome in twelve days but delays of three weeks are known, and six weeks are also recorded. Navigation stopped in winter and laws issued in autumn normally only reached Africa in the following spring. A law issued at Constantinople might reach any place in the east within a fortnight but the journey might take much longer, quite apart from likely bureaucratic delay. It might be many months before a communication from a province to the capital was answered. Long delay came to be expected. A court official might absent himself from his duties for six months before penalties began to be applied. A year's absence was punished with the loss of places of seniority, and only after he had stayed away for more than four years could the official be dismissed from the service. Soldiers were struck off the role when they had been absent for three years.

The administration, or rather the classes from which it was recruited, lacked an adequate code of public conduct. It is true that the government took an idealistic view of its duty to provide for the needs of the community, to ensure the safety and well-being of the governed, to provide justice for those who appeared in its courts. But members of the administration treated their appointments as a means to social and economic gain for themselves, and above all their friends and dependents. The city-state code of the duties which a public figure owed to his friends and dependants had not been superseded by one which proclaimed that impartiality and disinterestedness are required of a public servant. It is not therefore surprising that for men making appointments to administrative posts the problem was not to find candidates who had the right qualifications for particular responsibilities, but to find enough posts for numerous would-be officials who were socially qualified and well connected, or willing to pay for the post. The semi-legal gratuities paid to officials, shading into outright extortion, were a heavy burden on the ordinary citizen. The fact that the wealthy and influential could often obtain constitutions or other documents bearing the emperor's signature which exempted them from the scope of existing legislation amounted to a serious limitation of the rule of law. The large number of regulations by which emperors made office staff and heads of department mutually responsible

for each other's conduct, and the frequency with which emperors tried to forestall anticipated legalization of illegalities, show how serious these abuses were, and how ineffective the authorities' attempts to check them. If the history of the Late Empire shows an increasing alienation of the population from the government, the conduct of an administration that appeared to exist mainly for the sake of its self-perpetuation is likely to have been a principal cause.

As it was the system could only be maintained by far-reaching regimentation to prevent individuals leaving the more unpleasant and exposed occupations to enter the more prestigious, more profitable and safer ones. Thus a large part of the population were frozen into hereditary occupations. Tenants registered on their land-lord's tax returns were forbidden to leave his farms. The duties for the feeding of Rome performed by corn-shippers (*navicularii*), bakers and butchers were attached in perpetuity to these men's land so that they would pass automatically to any purchaser. Sons of soldiers were forced to follow their fathers into the army, and of workers in government factories into the factories. Service in the offices of provincial governors was made hereditary and so was the decurions' membership of city-councils (*curiae*). The effects of this legislation are best known in the case of the decurions. It is quite clear that social mobility on their part was hampered but by no means prevented.

The inevitable movement of decurions into the civil service was one of several ways in which the growing imperial administration weakened the local government which it was supposed to supervise and direct. Since a governor now only had to supervise two or three cities in his reduced province, his intervention could become continuous. The councils ceased to be debating and policy-making assemblies, and probably no longer met for any other purpose than to elect men to perform compulsory public service. Decisions of policy were made by the governor on the advice of whomever he chose to consult. At the same time the council ceased to be composed of the natural leaders of the city. From the beginning of the fourth century the wealthiest and most enterprising decurions were drawn into imperial service. This was less serious when most of the posts involved were of equestrian rank which did not confer hereditary immunity from curial duties. But in the course of the century more and more posts were raised in status so that they came to confer senatorial rank, which was hereditary, and would deprive the councils of the service of men and property for ever. To make things worse councillors who failed to obtain imperial office might manage to get honorary rank. The government legislated again and again to keep councillors and property at the disposal of their council,

evidently to little avail. One reason for the failure was the fact that information, on which enforcement of the legislation could be based, had to come from the councillors themselves, and that they, whether as a favour to friends or because they might themselves one day hope to seek imperial honours, or even because they saw opportunities of profit as leaders of a reduced council, did not provide the information. Thus a large number of decurions did succeed in getting away. Such men eventually settled either as senators at Rome or Constantinople, or in some provincial city as *honorati*, fortified with privilege of ex-officials, and with exemption from the compulsory duties of the local city-council. They would become leaders of provincial society and their patronage and opinions would be valued more highly than those of the more dutiful men who had remained councillors. Inevitably it was to them rather than to the councillors that the humbler inhabitants looked for protection. In strongly Christian areas the prestige of the councillors would be further undermined by the appearance of effective patrons of the country population in the shape of hermits or heads of monasteries.

How this development affected the administration of cities and their territories is difficult to observe as evidence for the fifth century is less than that for the fourth. Decurions continued to exist and to perform executive roles in the cities to the reign of Justinian at least, and in many places much longer. Councils became smaller and poorer, although they continued to include some men of wealth and influence (*principales*) whose status was not very different from that of members of the senatorial order of less than illustrious rank who were no longer required to live in the capital. It is likely that the administration of the city, as far as it was not in the hands of the governor and his *officium*, passed from the council to a more informal body of notables which included both *principales* and *honorati* and – a new development – the bishop and leading clergy (Jones, 1964, 75 8fF. ; cf. also Liebeschuetz, 1973, and 1974, and Hohlweg, 1971). As early as 407 a western law transferred the election of the *defensor* to the notables. In the east it was left to Anastasius to assign to the notables the election of the *defensor*, *curator* (or *pater*) and corn-buyer. Anastasius' legislation, perhaps only confirming what had already been the practice for many years, may well have marked the formal end of curial administration of the cities. At any rate John Lydus in the 550s could write of curial administration as belonging to the past. Compared with decurions notables enjoyed the advantage that they would negotiate with governors and their senior officials on more or less equal terms since most notables could claim at least some privileges of official rank. There is no evidence that the

authorities ever attempted to subject the notables to the hereditary compulsion to which decurions continued to be subject.

It should be noted that the decline of curial government was a consequence of the strengthening of the central administration, not of the physical decline of the cities and their population. There is evidence that cities continued to flourish in the east up to at least the first quarter of the sixth century (Foss, 1976 and 1977). In much of the west, in the Balkans, in Britain and in large parts of Gaul and Spain there was of course, in addition, a withdrawal from city-life from the third or at least the second half of the fourth century (see King and Henig, 1981: essays by Reece, Blagg, Walker, Sheldon, Keay), but where cities survived councils continued to meet, and magistrates to be elected – even if the activities for which we have evidence are notarial rather than administrative. It may even be that from the fifth century decurions were relatively more important in the shrinking cities of the west than their colleagues in the flourishing cities of the east. Documents testify to the survival of councils in Italy and Spain to the seventh and even eighth centuries (Jones, 1964, 760–1; Thompson, 1969, 118–21). In the east city councils were formally abolished by Leo the Wise (886–912) (see Ostrogorsky, 1968, 217–18; Jones, 1940, 209–10).

The history of the city councils illustrates how the strengthening of the administrative machinery for enforcing the demands of the central government set in motion other trends which would eventually make the new machinery less effective. A similar reaction happened in the area of patronages. The same officials, officers, soldiers, *honorati* who used their influence to enable decurions to escape from councils, also helped humble peasants to reduce their tax payments. The patron might physically assist his clients to resist the tax collectors. Alternatively he might use his influence when the case of the recalcitrant tax payers came to court. In the east the patron's reward seems normally to have consisted – at first at any rate – of regular payments by the client. In the west it seems to have been more usual for the peasant to hand his land over to the patron who would then resist the tax-claim as if it had been made against himself. Patrons were also used to protect tenants against their landlords. Not all patronage was voluntary. There is no doubt that powerful men often imposed their protection on unwilling peasants. The eastern government – not that of the west – legislated against patronage, but not perhaps with great success. The long-term consequence of patronage seems to have been the concentration of property in the hands of those able to offer or enforce patronage, and a reduction in the administration's ability to raise taxes.

It might therefore be said that the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine

proved to some extent self-defeating. They nevertheless achieved extremely important positive results. The Empire was given a new lease of life. The frontiers were defended successfully. Usurpation became very much more difficult. In the east no usurper at all succeeded within our period, and even attempts were few and ineffective. After the death of Theodosius I stable government survived the reigns of the feeble Arcadius and the not much more effective Theodosius II. The west was less stable. Not all the provinces enjoyed continuous peace and a number of usurpations were at least temporarily successful. In spite of this the fourth century was on the whole an age of recovery.

It was only possible because the administration was able to collect the taxes required to maintain the Empire's armies or alternatively to buy off invaders. In some ways the administration was too efficient. The authorities found it easier to force money out of the tax-payer than to ensure that it was spent for the purposes for which it was collected. The level of taxation tended to rise and may well have reached crushing levels. But Jones was probably mistaken to conclude that taxation helped to bring about a reduction in the population, as rents and taxes together had not left peasants with enough income to bring up children (Jones, 1964, 1040–5). In fact the population of the east seems to have been growing through most of the fourth and fifth centuries (Patlagean, 1972, 231–5, 302–13). In the west there was a reduction in some areas which made possible the settlement of very large numbers of barbarians (de Ste Croix, 1981, 509–18). But the legislation on abandoned land is much less good evidence of depopulation than has been thought, and there seems to be evidence of actual growth of population in some areas. There is a suspicion that barbarian invasions contributed at least as much as taxation to any reduction in the rural population and abandonment of land in the west. Nevertheless taxes were resented, and when the western government eventually failed to protect the provincials in spite of the heavy taxes that they had paid to it disillusion with the Empire must have been all the more complete.

The achievement of the Late Empire was to maintain control of a civilian central administration over the provinces, and especially, because this was hardest, over the great land-owners and the army. In both crucial areas the administration of the east was more successful than that of the west. In the east it remained in clear control of its great land-owners well beyond the end of this period. In the west the senatorial aristocracy came to neutralize the provincial administration by filling a high proportion of its principal posts with its own members. In the relationship between the civilian government and the army important differences between east and west

became evident when the Empire was divided between the sons of Theodosius I in 395. In the east the five commanders of field armies, the *magistri militum praesentales* and the *magistri militum* of Thrace, Illyricum and the East were all independent of each other, and each the superior of the dukes commanding frontier forts in his area. In the west the *magister peditum praesentalis* was the commander-in-chief of all armies in that half of the Empire. He was so powerful that he could only be deposed by assassination or battle. Under a weak emperor like Honorius or Valentinian III the Empire was governed by its commander-in-chief. Potentially strong emperors like Majorian and Anthemius were frustrated, and eventually destroyed, by their generals. The Western Empire came to an end when Odoacer, the *magister peditum*, deposed Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor in 476 (Croke, 1983). In the east the situation was quite different. The civilians remained in control. Under the weak Arcadius the Empire was guided by its praetorian prefects, notably Rufinus and Anthemius and for a time, Eutropius, *praepositus sacri cubiculi* and a eunuch. During the reign of Theodosius II the Empire seems to have been directed for many years by the emperor's sister Pulcheria. It was a measure of civilian supremacy in the east that the *magister officiorum* was given important duties in the supervision of the army. During all this time the Eastern Empire followed consistent, if unheroic policies when expedient, diverting threatening barbarians with large payments, so that they attacked the west instead. Thus the east weathered the storm in which the west foundered.

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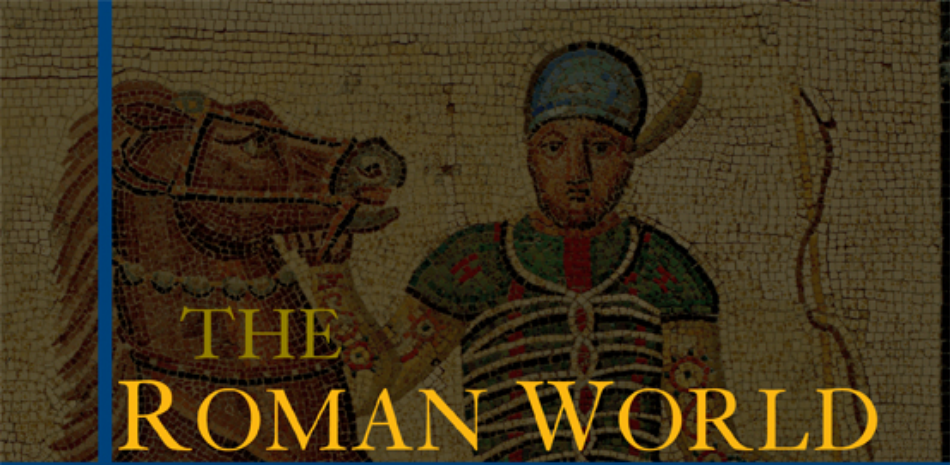
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A large Roman mosaic depicting a soldier in full armor standing next to a horse. The soldier wears a blue helmet with a crest, a green tunic with red and white horizontal stripes, and a red sash. He holds a bow in his left hand. The horse is brown with a white mane and tail. The mosaic is made of small, irregular tiles.

THE ROMAN WORLD



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PART 7

· RURAL · LIFE ·

· AGRICULTURE · AND · · HORTICULTURE ·

Sian Rees

‘This part of Europe has a more temperate climate than we find further inland. For the winter is almost continuous in the interior.’ Thus Varro introduces his reader in his work *Rerum Rusticarum* (i,ii,2–5) to the climatic benefits of Italy, and his division of the European climate into the Mediterranean and the northern European is largely true for the Empire as a whole. Within this simple two-fold division, the lands of the Empire covered a variety of climate, soils and topography, and the Romans were, of course, as dependent upon these factors as anyone else. While various facets of Roman administration in the provinces could be standardized, in the field of agriculture, Roman practice tended to be heavily based on the pre-Roman, with its inevitable accumulation of wisdom in dealing with the physical characteristics of each area. Indeed it might be said that it was largely through the non-agricultural provisions, of urbanization, communications, peace, and incentive for producing a surplus, that Roman rule in the provinces made the major contribution toward agricultural development.

The two-fold division of the lands of the Empire into the Mediterranean lands with their hot, dry summers, and the northern provinces with their cooler, wetter climate is reflected in the two quite different farming techniques practised in the respective zones: ‘dry farming’ in the former, ‘humid farming’ in the latter. This same division is largely true of the topography; the Mediterranean lands have mountain chains, low hills and alluvial plains which support different agricultural regimes: timber or

summer pasture on the thin mountain soils; crops on the foothills, with olive and vine on the less rich upper parts, cereals on the lower; and stock raising and/or arable on the alluvial plains. The northern provinces have large areas of plain lands of heavier, fertile clays and loams alternating with downs of lighter but poorer chalks and limestones, with intrusions of mountain ranges. The upland areas tend to be better for stock, while the lower areas may support arable or mixed farming. They have too little sunshine, of course, to allow olives, and the vine is certainly far less extensive (Stevens, 1966, 92–4).

Agricultural practices of the Roman period varied also depending on the type of pre-existing society. Many areas, such as early republican Italy were farmed by peasant agriculturalists on mixed subsistence farms, potentially, or even actually, able to make a surplus, but lacking much incentive to do so. Other areas already had highly developed agricultural systems, having been part of previous empires. Carthaginian areas of north Africa, Egypt and the Near East all had well worked out and distinctive economic and agricultural practices, with different forms of land ownership and tenurial systems, and these arrangements inevitably coloured the subsequent Roman development of their agriculture.

Of great importance as source material for this study are the works of the Roman agronomists, from Cato writing in the second century BC to Palladius in the late fourth century AD. These writers clearly benefited from the earlier treatises of Greek and Carthaginian philosophers and scientists, but unlike them, Roman agronomists wrote from first-hand agriculture experience. Cato's *De Agri Cultura*, the more systematic, practical *De Re Rustica* of Varro, written in 37 BC, and the twelve books of Columella's *De Re Rustica*, written in the mid-first century AD, describe agriculture purely in Italy, while the two volumes of agriculture in the Elder Pliny's vast *Encyclopaedia of Natural History* include material gleaned, usefully, from North Africa, the Near East and northern Europe as well as Italy. There is then a gap in the surviving material to Palladius in the later part of the fourth century. His calendar of instructions is heavily dependent on Columella, but gives us valuable insight into the agrarian recession. As well as these textbooks, innumerable references can be found to agricultural practices in non-agricultural writings: the speeches of Cicero and the poetry of Vergil, for instance. The documentary sources of the Empire outside Italy are far poorer. Reliance must be made on casual references in books such as Strabo's *Geographica*, or reference works like the *Digest*, a late, legal compilation which gives information about leases, rights and responsibilities of landowners (Part 6, Chapter 16). Papyri,

surviving from Egypt because of the dry archaeological conditions, give details of sales, wills, census returns, accounts, equipment and inventories and are generally tantalizing about how much must have been lost elsewhere. Inscriptions can be useful, for instance, the series dealing with irrigation supplies in Numidia. Archaeological evidence is vital both for Italy, where it can supplement the written evidence, and for the provinces where largely it has to stand alone; knowledge of farm types, implements, fields, types of crops and their variety, nutrient value and cleanness from weeds and the growth or decline of single or groups of farms and their interrelationship is largely dependent upon information revealed by excavation, aerial photography and botanical analysis, as well as pictorial evidence on sculpture, mosaics and models.

Agriculture was of paramount importance in the economy of the Empire. References in the agronomists suggest that agriculture, unlike risky and often shady business life, was regarded as the sole respectable profession. Land remained throughout the period the only safe and permanent form of investment (Jones, 1964, 769–73) and in taxes, it provided the vast bulk of the revenue of the state. The land tax financed the main administrative needs, while other taxes paid by the land-owning classes, and rents from imperial lands, fed other departments. Rents on agricultural land were also important for the incomes of institutions such as the cities, and later the church, and the incomes of private landowners and the professional classes, who tended to invest in land, depended upon it. Investment in land tended inevitably to build up large estates at the expense of the small proprietor. The free land-owning peasant, however, while declining dramatically as a class, remained an important element in the rural population. There is evidence for considerable numbers late on in the Empire in the villages of Asia Minor, Egypt and Thrace and while it is certainly true that Italy, Sicily, Spain, North Africa and Gaul were largely populated by medium to large estates, there is, even here, evidence for the survival of the peasant proprietor.

Agriculture in early Italy was probably based on the subsistence, mixed farms of small peasant proprietors, with southern Italy and Etruria more heavily dependent on cereals, Latium on pastoralism. The olive and the vine are indigenous to the entire Mediterranean, but, while their cultivation was certainly important in republican Italy, the spread of these more profitable forms of cultivation from the first century BC was one of the noteworthy features of Italian agriculture. As Rome grew to dominate all Italy, the wine and olive-oil production of the Punic cities was severe competition, a not insignificant factor in the determination to destroy

Carthage. The old Carthaginian territories were reduced to one vast area of cereal growing and Rome's early provinces of Sicily, Sardinia and the Punic parts of Spain remained what they had been for Carthage, granaries producing surplus grain for import to the City (Rostovtzeff, 1926, 195). The newly-acquired western provinces were prohibited in the early days from planting vines, so that the protected Italian production was now provided with splendid markets for the sale of oil and wine. Thus grew up the notion of commercial farming on mixed farms run by slave labour and with land as an investment that is seen in Cato. Estates, again slave-run, became increasingly important from the late republican period onward. They show considerable variety in type predominating between large-scale ranches, based on transhumance, and those based on mixed farming; by Varro's time, estates had commonly reached a size whereby trade between land-owners was viable and private estate-run services like smithies are found. Wheat growing was still part of the normal pattern of farming, though Columella in the first century AD is gloomy about its productivity and profitability. Free tenants are beginning to be mentioned alongside slaves as labour for an estate, since the supply of slaves provided by the conquest of new territories was falling away, so creating a labour shortage ([Part 9, Chapter 28](#)).

As new areas gradually became assimilated into the Empire, the characteristic development of each province would, with the establishment of peace, depend on the setting up of administrative systems based on new or existing urban centres and improved communications. The reasons for so doing were primarily fiscal, but they also resulted in a benefit to agriculture. The cities would be assigned large tracts of land for which they were responsible, and the increase of markets and of a non-productive administrative class, which had to be fed, together with improved networks of communications and the requirements of taxation, all led to the necessity to produce a surplus. In the military provinces there was also the army to be supplied. In many new provinces the earliest romanization of the countryside would have been by way of the immigration of an Italian colonist either by grant of land, to army veterans, for example, or through his own private investment. Enterprising members of the native aristocracy would have followed the lead, investing in the land but often living and working in the city. The labour on such farms would inevitably be local natives. The degree of romanization would thus depend on the attractiveness of the country to investment and also the initiative of the native land-owners. Hence in some areas such as North Africa with relatively undeveloped agriculture but fertile soils, the spread of large

estates was legendary, while in other less fertile or mountainous countries, such as some of the Danube provinces, romanization was far from widespread.

By the first century AD, there had been rapid economic growth in many provinces. When, under Augustus, the prohibition on viticulture outside Italy had been removed, vine and olive growing developed rapidly, the former especially in Gaul, the latter in Spain and Africa. Inevitably there was increased competition for the markets that Italy had hitherto dominated. There are hints of gluts in the wine market, as Gallic wine of high quality won markets and Italian oil suffered from the competition of oil from Africa (cheaper) and Spain (higher quality); imperial edicts were passed as a protection for Italian producers of wine at the expense of provincials, but were only partly successful, while provincial oil production was allowed to continue unabated and many areas, North Africa in particular, developed vast olive estates.

The tendency toward larger estates owned by fewer, wealthy men who let out their land, often scattered, to tenant farmers increases both in Italy and the provinces in the second century and onwards. The largest estates were, of course, those of the imperial government and next, the estates of the senatorial classes. In the later Empire, the Church also acquired vast estates, which tended to be at the expense of the professional, urban-based classes running the medium-sized farm, as well as the landed peasant. Great landowners could either farm their land through agents, or, as became more and more the norm, lease farms on short or long term - lifetime or in perpetuity - conditions; only the home farm, at least in Italy, was left to be run by slaves under a slave manager to provide a country residence and agricultural produce for the landowner himself. Jones thinks it unlikely that slave labour was extensively used outside Italy and Spain (Jones, 1964, 794).

The rents paid varied considerably from area to area. In Egypt a fixed payment in kind was normal, in Africa share-cropping, by which owner and tenant divided the produce according to a written agreement, was common. In Italy, money rents were usual, though part of the rent could be paid in produce, as tenants paying only money were very vulnerable to debt after bad harvests.

During the troubles of the third century, inflation, high taxation necessitated by the increasing costs of military defence, and general social and political instability, led in many parts of the Empire to a general economic depression, with a consequent decline in agriculture. Land went uncultivated and farms were abandoned, and *agri deserti* (abandoned

lands) were a constant theme in the legislation, as various emperors, from Pertinax onwards, issued edicts providing incentives for private people to cultivate deserted land on long leases, either private or imperial, Italian or provincial. The few figures that are available suggest that, while in some areas such as Asia, the problem was not too bad, with about 5 per cent uncultivated, in Africa Proconsularis, by the early fifth century, the situation was disastrous with about 30 per cent abandoned. But the deterioration was uneven, and in the early fourth century there was even a certain recovery resulting from strong imperial leadership and a reorganization of administration and the currency. The villas of the Roman world show this decline and recovery (Percival, 1976, 46) though the recovery was, as Percival remarks one 'of economic stability on a lower and generally more sober level'. Some areas such as Dacia, no longer part of the Empire, never recovered at all; Britain on the other hand is peculiar in having a very vigorous recovery in the fourth century, probably largely because it had escaped invasion and civil war on anything like the continental scale (Applebaum, 1972, 228–9). But the rich tended to get richer, the poor poorer, and the lot of the tenant farmer in the later Empire was unenviable.

Turning now to actual techniques of farming practised in Italy, there is a fair amount of evidence, written and archaeological, while for the provinces the evidence is largely archaeological. In the Mediterranean, the techniques of dry farming, with its emphasis on water conservation, had certainly been worked out by Cato's time. At its simplest, this was a two-year crop-fallow system. The seed would be sown broadcast between October and December depending on the area, and the field would be harrowed and hoed throughout the winter to keep weeds down and to conserve the water from the winter rains. The grain would be harvested as early as possible in June or July, and a period of fallow would follow with weed removal by hoeing and one ploughing in late summer; there would then be at least three ploughings (Pliny advocates nine) in the following spring, with a final ploughing, often with ridging for drainage, to prepare the ground for the October sowing. This labour-intensive method of cultivation effected water conservation as much as soil replenishment, as two years' rainfall contributed towards the growth of one year's crop. The fine tilth created by the continuous ploughing minimized evaporation from the wetter lower levels, and encouraged the often heavy winter rains to soak in; constant weed removal avoided water loss by plant transpiration. The plough was thus used as a weeding and stirring tool, and inversion of the sod was not necessary. Fallow and stubble burning would contribute to

the replenishment of the soil, for, while Roman farmers certainly understood the vital nature of manuring, their problem was an acute shortage of animal dung. The shortage of permanent pasture due to the summer drought meant that only essential working animals were stall fed, and most animals were led to distant summer pastures on a transhumance basis, hence the loss of half the manure produced. Thus the climate, rather than the lack of understanding, led to the somewhat unproductive crop-fallow system.

There is evidence, however, of plenty of variations on this system. Cato refers to ground which does not require to be fallowed, implying that fertile, wetter areas like Campania could tolerate annual cropping. From the first century AD there are increasing references to partial legume rotation and combination cropping (White, 1970, 122–3). The first of them, with variations on the fallow to beans/legume to grain, is when legumes alternate with a cereal crop, the legumes providing the necessary nitrogen; the latter is the intercultivation of cereal crops with vines or, more commonly, with olives which require wide spacing, are slow to mature and which normally have a good crop only in alternate years (pl. 18.4). Intercultivation thus maximized the profit from one area of land. How far these practices were commonly used and how far they were mere textbook recommendations is difficult to say, but White suggests that rotation was not exceptional at least in Vergil's day (*Georgics* 1, 1–71 ff) while Columella mentions combination cropping as though it were quite common (V, 9.7); Pliny refers to its use in Andalusia (XVIII, 94).

As the interdependence of animal and crop husbandry was understood, and the technique of combination cropping was followed, the medium-sized mixed farm perforce remained the Roman ideal, certainly to Columella's day, despite the decline of cereal farming and the increase in vine and olive growing and large-scale ranching. Columella's ideal mixed farm would be run by a staff of slaves under a slave manager and would have sufficient variety of terrain to allow level ground for meadows, arable, willows and reed plantations, hills for grain, olive and vineyards, copses for vine props and pasture; it was preferably near a town or to sea or road communications for markets. Cattle and other domestic animals would graze the tilled land and the lightly timbered portion. However, far more space in his books is devoted to vine and olive cultivation and animal husbandry than cereals and legumes, suggesting their relative unimportance by this time. Columella is clear that he regards a slave-run farm, personally supervised by the owner, as the most profitable, but failing that, country-bred, conscientious, free tenants are preferable to unsupervised slave

managers, and it would seem that the system of a home farm worked by slaves, surrounded by tenant farmers was already beginning to appear (Heitland, 1921, 255). He condemns large estates because the inevitable lack of supervision leads to decay, with lands either being overgrazed or alternatively left unworked. The main advances from Varro's day - partial legume rotation and combination cropping - require intensive labour and he is gloomy about the decline in productivity caused by bad management and carelessness.,

Roman knowledge of soils inevitably depended almost totally upon the accumulated experience of farmers of the suitability of different crops to different soils - practical land use - and they knew nothing of soil classification according to structure and texture (White, 1970, 94-6). The agronomists gave advice on tests for fertility and moisture content as a guide to land purchase and selection of suitable crop, but their rough and ready methods failed to distinguish some fundamentals such as how a soil can vary in different conditions, with good management or neglect. The system of combination cropping and the tendency towards specialization laid heavy burdens on the natural fertility of the soil especially on continuously cropped land, and manuring was absolutely necessary. The evident shortage of animal manure is emphasized by the agronomists' advice to gather manure wherever possible, from poultry and all domestic animals, with the relative merits of the manure from each animal being impressively documented. Advice which conforms quite closely to modern practice on preparation, method and quantity of manuring for different crops is given, and Columella advises that irrigated gardens and orchards, which require heavy manuring for rapid feeding should be positioned so that manure-laden sewage from barnyards and house use and the lees squeezed from olives could flow there to facilitate application. Composts, made from straw, vegetable waste and chaff, leaves, ashes, sewage sludge and even house sweepings, and green manures, especially lupins, dug back into the soil while the plants are still green in May, to rot down before autumn sowing, are two substitutes for animal manures mentioned, suggesting again the shortage of the latter. There is also advice on the practice of marling and soil mixing to improve the quality of poor soils, though how often this labour-intensive technique could have been carried out is, of course, unknown. Treatment of the soil with wood ash and seaweed is referred to occasionally, though this seems to have been uncommon.

In Mediterranean countries with summer drought and short-lived but often torrential winter rains, drainage was of great importance. Large-scale

drainage works to reclaim agricultural land had been carried out by the Etruscans in the north of Italy and schemes of this type were continued by Roman engineers. Some, like the Po Valley drainage scheme, were successful while others, like that of the Pomptine Marches in Campania, proved to be beyond their capacity. Normal field drainage was a matter of course and by Columella's day was quite sophisticated. Open drains on clay soils, or covered drains filled with stones, gravel or brushwood were carefully positioned to minimize soil erosion and the damage to young plants in winter storms and Pliny advocates the ridging of wetter lands while ploughing, so that while the seed is sown in the ridges, furrows were left for drainage of surface water (*Natural History* XVIII, 179). Irrigation, by channel from natural springs, or raised from wells, was used in Italy for intensively cultivated market garden plots, and in drier areas such as south Spain for fruit, olives and vines, though these could generally withstand drought without irrigation. The same was true of cereals and legumes. If farmers had no natural spring or well water they normally had to do without irrigation, though in some areas such as Tusculum near Rome, farmers could buy into the right to water from aqueducts with a strictly controlled number of hours being allowed to each user. Our knowledge of irrigation on a larger scale is greater in north Africa, Egypt, where the best systems were, and Syria ([p. 497 below](#)).

Crops grown by the Roman farmer around the Mediterranean were either sown - cereals and legumes, fodder crops and pasture for stock - or planted - olive, vine, nut, fig and fruit trees - as well as the products of the kitchen garden. Cereals were grown primarily as autumn-sown wheat and spelt, and to a lesser extent the not so highly esteemed six-row barley, while spring-sown wheat and barley seems only to have been used when the main crop had failed. Millet was grown on a large scale in Egypt, in the Middle East and Gaul but not, it seems, in Italy. Rye was considered an easy crop to grow but unpleasant to eat. Lupins, vetch and field beans were used as fodder or green manure while lucerne, alfalfa and vetches could be grown singly for cattle feed or as mixed forage crops in combination with barley, oats or emmer (White, 1970, 190–1). The soil improving qualities of these legumes, which return nitrogen to the soil, was appreciated, and they were used in rotation with cereals ([p. 486 above](#)). Their cultivation required the same dry farming techniques as cereals. In times of famine, Columella mentions that the lupin could also be used for human food, and crops such as turnips and rape, grown in wetter areas primarily for fodder, were also occasionally used for human consumption. The Roman farmer understood the necessity for selecting the best grain for the seed corn at threshing.

Improvement in varieties is not specifically mentioned, but Columella and Pliny between them mention six different varieties of wheat (White, 1970, 188–9).

Cultivation of the vine and olive quickly reached very sophisticated levels, and while Cato mentioned only seven varieties of olive, Pliny knew of fifteen, and all authorities stress the importance of the selection of the right variety for different soils. A large number of varieties of vine were known, and the introduction of viticulture into western provinces eventually produced some very fine wines. The fig was also important especially, so Columella tells us, as a dried food for country folk in winter. It was grown in south-west Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, and Pliny enumerates twenty-nine varieties while Palladius mentions that it would take too long to list all the known varieties. Vegetables grown in irrigated market gardens and orchard fruits were most important for the primarily vegetarian Roman diet, with beans, turnips, rape, radish, carrots, peas and lettuce with a variety of herbs being commonly grown. The almond and hazel trees of southern Italy were famous. Apples and pears could be grown with care in central Italy, while other fruits including the cherry and peach were introduced. The market stimulus providing incentive for the development of new varieties in vine, olive and fruit growing was not so evident in the less profitable cereal cultivation. As well as these main crops, the model farm was expected to have a plantation of willows for weaving into basketry for storage, transport, collection, harvesting, winnowing, hurdles, strainers for honey and wine, matting and beehives and innumerable other purposes ; willow branches were used for vine props of which a vast number were required, and its bark for vine ties (White, 1975, 51–103 and 234).

The Roman plough, vital in dry farming as a weeding and stirring implement, as well as being used for the preparation of the seed bed, was a light ard (a plough without a mould board) with wooden share or more commonly, an iron-tanged or socketed share. The actual form of the plough used is open to doubt as the only description we have is a poetic one (Vergil *Georgics* I, 169–74); the only archaeological remains of Mediterranean ploughs are of iron shares which could arguably fit either of the two main types of ard known to exist in contemporary Europe, the sole ard in which the beam is set into the sole or working part, or the bow ard where the working part is fitted into the curving beam (White, 1970, 174–5; 1967a, 123–44; Aitken, 1956, 97–106; Manning, 1964 and 1971; Rees, 1979, 65–9; [fig. 18.1](#)). Both types co-existed at somewhat earlier periods in north-west Europe (Glob, 1951) and it is not inconceivable that both co-existed

perhaps for different tasks in Roman Italy though admittedly the agronomists make no reference to two types. Cross ploughing, the first to break the surface, the

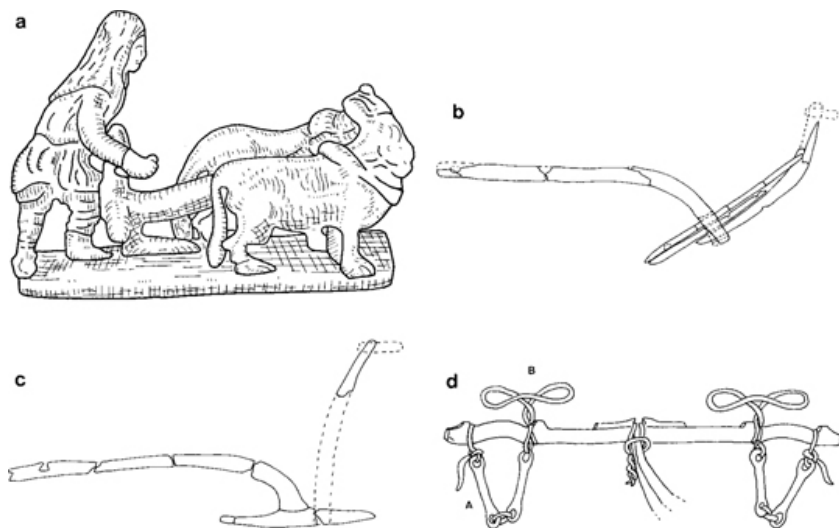


Figure 18.1 Roman ploughs: (a) bronze plough model from Pierce bridge, Britain; (b) bow or beam ard; (c) crook or sole ard; (d) horn yoke with (A) neck ties and (B) noose fastenings

second at right angles to the first to break clods so finely that you could not tell the direction of the plough (Pliny, *Natural History*, XVIII, 178) was advocated for preparation of the seed bed; a third ploughing after the broadcast sowing of the seed could be carried out with ridging boards attached so as to cover the seed, or ridging could be done before sowing, the seed set on the ridges and covered by rakes or bush harrows. A team of two oxen yoked at the withers was normal, though horn yokes (fig. 18.2) were often used in the provinces but were condemned as cruel by Columella and Pliny; larger teams of oxen could also be employed for special circumstances (Rees, 1979, 72–9). Wheat was normally sown thinly to encourage bushing out and sometimes this was further encouraged by turning cattle in to browse on the young plants soon after they germinated.

The winter hoeing was done with a variety of different mattocks, hoes and rakes to suit different soils, and care had to be taken not to disturb the young cereal plants (fig. 18.3). Harvesting was done with the hand sickle, and Varro describes three different methods used in different regions of Italy (fig. 18.4). In Umbria the stalks were cut close to the ground, then the ears cut off, the straw being stacked separately; in Picenum, the ears were

cut first with a saw-like implement, and the straw cut later; near Rome and generally, the stalks were cut at middle height. These differences reflect the different requirements for straw; cutting the corn half way up would leave useful litter after threshing, and stubble for the herds to graze in (White, 1970, 182); in dry areas, however, stubble would be quickly parched and rendered useless for grazing and stubble burning was clearly commonly practised. After harvesting, the corn was carried in baskets for threshing which was done by animal treading, by hand flails or by threshing sledge on a circular threshing floor with a hard, compact surface (pl. 18.3). Winnowing could be done by agitating winnowing baskets full of threshed grain so that the lighter chaff rose to the surface and was expelled, or by the winnowing shovel, using the wind to blow the lighter chaff from the mixture thrown into the air. Sieves would be used for final waste removal, and to separate the seed corn from the corn for consumption (White, 1975, 98). Grain was then stored in granaries which had to be cool and dry, with the walls, floors and ceilings treated to keep out vermin; the details which the authorities go into suggest that losses from mildew and vermin were considerable (White, 1970, 189). Grain was usually ground by the ubiquitous hand-operated, rotary quern, while larger-scale operations, near urban centres for instance, would use the far more efficient donkey driven mill (fig. 18.5). The undershot water wheel, apparently forty times more efficient than the donkey mill, was known by the first century BC, yet strangely seems never to have become widely distributed (White, 1970, 446–7).

Vines and olives would be reared in carefully prepared nursery beds for two to five years. Olive plants would then be transplanted to their permanent positions 9 m (30 ft) apart where no corn was to be sown between them, or 18 m by 12 m (60 ft by 40 ft) apart where combination cropping was practised in which case they would be

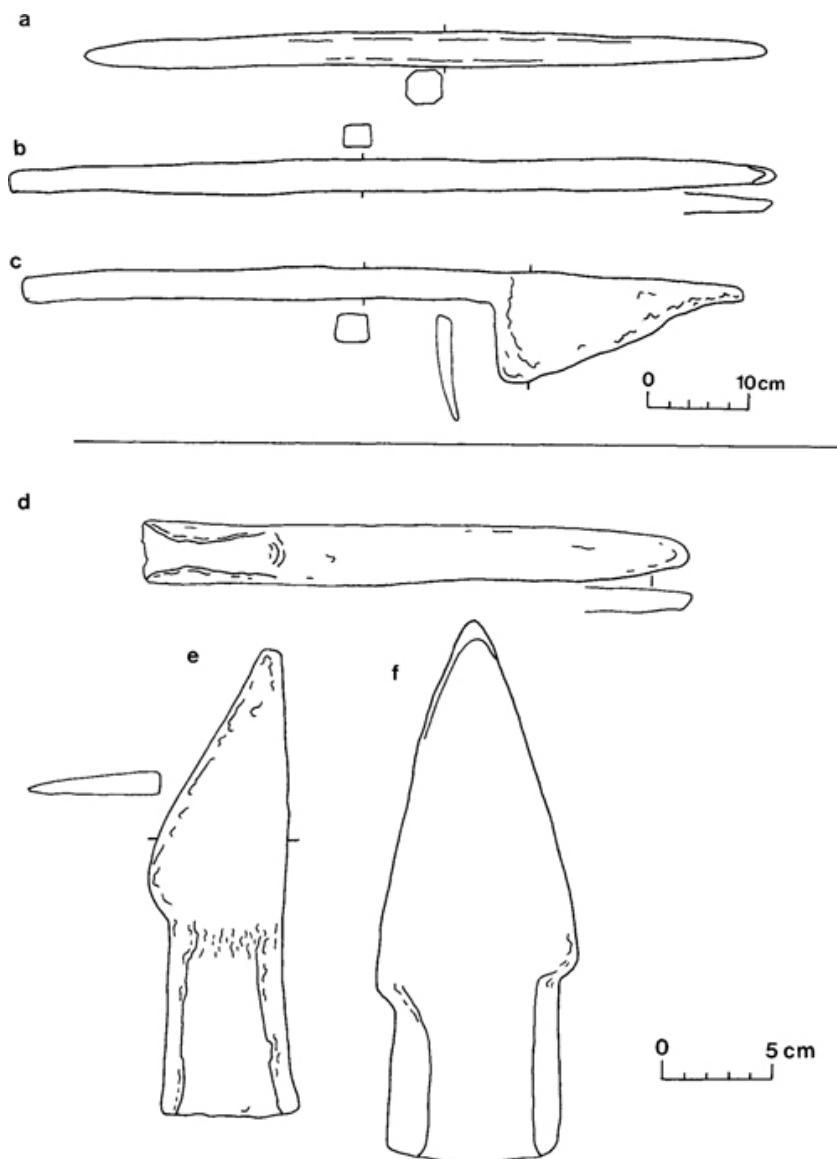


Figure 18.2 Romano-British ploughshares and coulter: (a) double-pointed bar share; (b) single-pointed bar share; (c) coulter; (d) iron sheath for bar share; (e) winged share; (f) symmetrical share

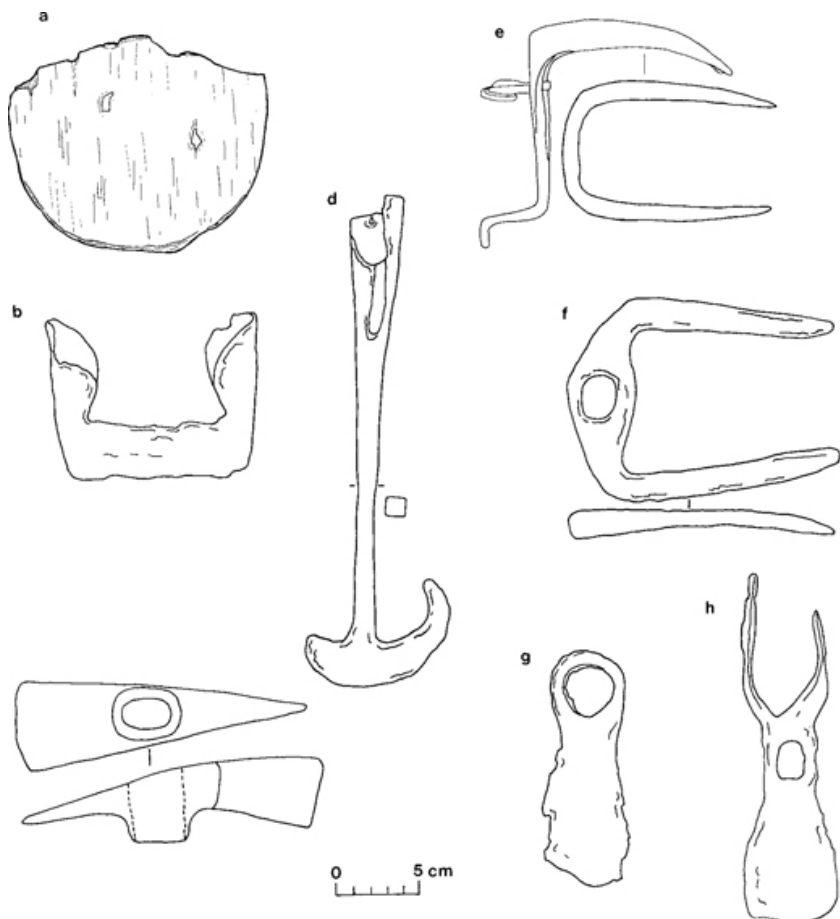


Figure 18.3 Roman spades and hoes: (a) remains of wooden spade; (b) iron sheath for spade; (c) iron mattock; (d) turf-cutter; (e and f) double-bladed hoes; (g) single-bladed hoe; (h) small weeding hoe

fenced to guard against damage from ploughing. Columella advised two ploughings a year to weed, cover the roots and drain, while manuring and pruning was also necessary. Slow to mature, the olive is a heavy investment and produces a full crop only in alternate years, hence the popularity of combination cropping, and the practice of dividing a grove into two to give an equal return each year.

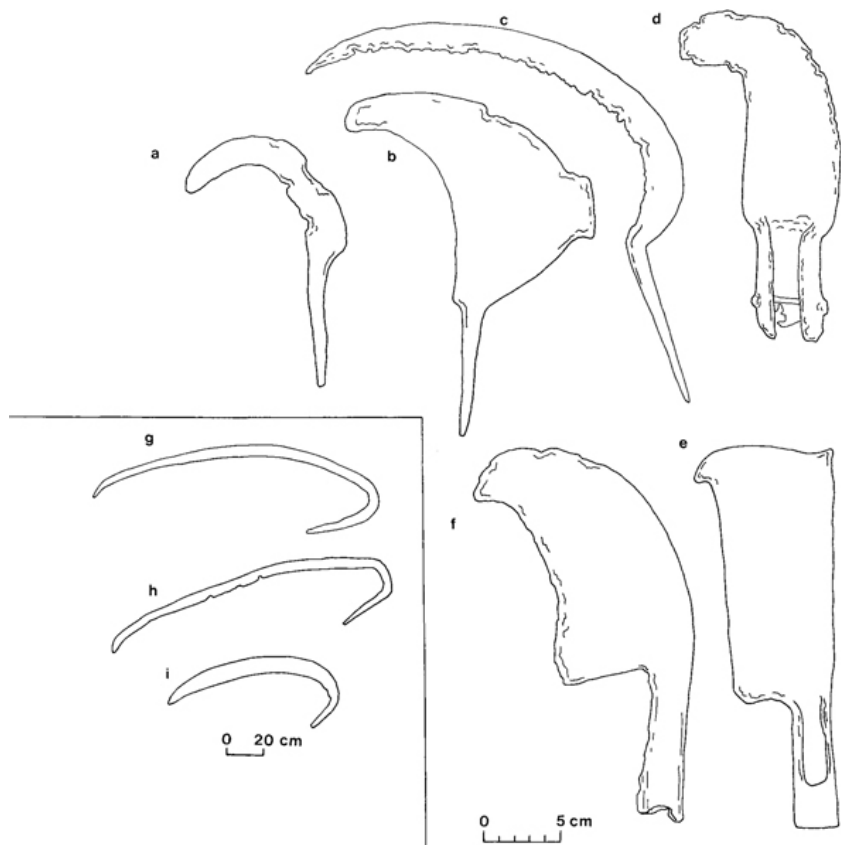


Figure 18.4 Roman sickles, hooks and scythes: (a) upright sickle; (b) vine knife; (c) balanced sickle; (d, e and f) billhooks; (g and h) long-balanced scythe; (i) short-balanced scythe

In November and December, the olives were harvested by picking, and by shaking or beating the higher branches (pl. 18.4); the produce would be pressed immediately after cleaning and softening in hot water. Four types of mill were known: the oil mill with two stones set on a horizontal axis; the revolving mill or *trapetum* (fig. 18.5) with two circular stones, plano-convex in section, which rotated against a mortar and central

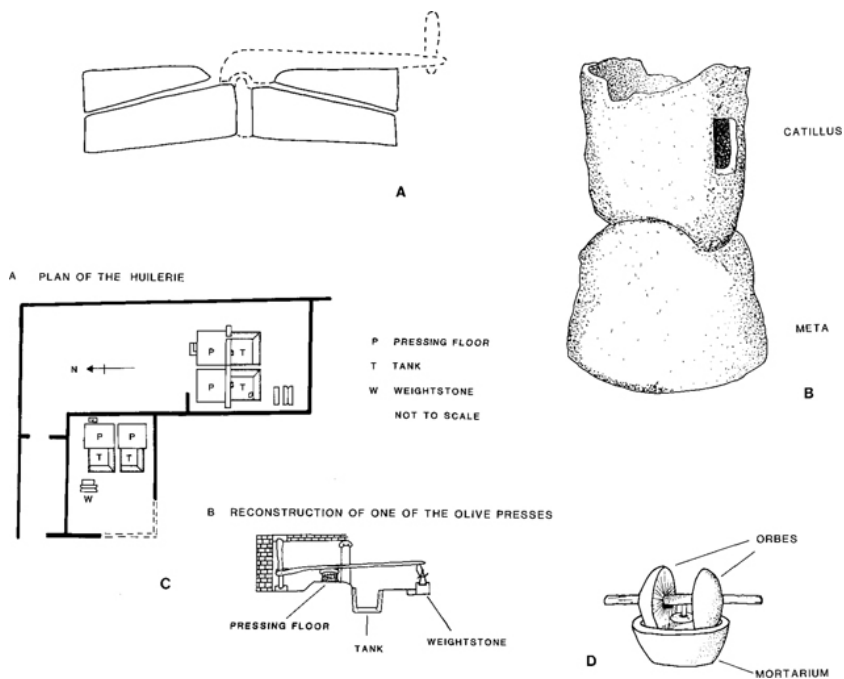


Figure 18.5 Roman mills and presses: (A) rotary quem of Roman type; (B) corn-mill from Albulae; (C) ‘Huilerie’ at Aquae Sirensis; (D) trapetum from Albulae (b, c, *dafter Lawless*)

pillar; a simple trough for manual treading; and a *tridicula*, seemingly a type of upright grater (White, 1975, 226–8). The oil was then squeezed from the resulting mush in a press, a variety of types of which were known, worked by combinations of levers and screws (for example [fig. 18.5](#)). The oil would be collected in a tank and stored in earthenware jars. The waste lees could be used in manuring.

Vines, like the olive, are indigenous to the Mediterranean, but need a great amount of care to be successfully grown. Transplanted from the nursery beds, they were set on carefully prepared soil, preferably on a southern facing slope; they were grown either unsupported or supported on stakes, trellises, pergolas or, in Italy at least, against other trees. The unsupported vine was much commoner in the provinces. Two-bladed or short, single-bladed hoes were used for the three aerations of the vineyard soil thought essential, and pruning was done either in October after the vintage or in the spring with a specialized billhook, the *falx vinitoria* ([fig. 18.4](#)). Speed was important in the vintage, in August in dry areas like southern Spain, or September in Italy and Gaul, and the work was often put out to contract or else casual labour was hired. The pickers worked with

grape-cutting knives, loading the grapes into baskets which would then be carted away either for treading or eating (pls 18.4b,c). When the grapes were trodden the remaining pulp would be pressed to extract the last of the juice, which would then be drawn into earthenware jars, proofed by pitch (pl. 18.4d), for fermentation. Columella records that discernment of the quality of a wine was an important feature of civilized life, even if it could be a little pretentious. We all know what he means!

What is known of field types on Mediterranean farms is very limited. Cato talks of vineyards of 100 *iugera* (i *iugerum* = c. 0.3 ha or 2/3 acre) and olive groves of 120 *iugera* on sloping ground with or without cereal intercultivation. Equally little is known of fields devoted to arable in villas, but with centuriation, the type of allotment where land is divided into blocks which were eventually standardized into 200 *iugerum* squares, traces of the layout occasionally survive, such as in Capua and the Lombard Plain in Italy, and extensively in North Africa.

This description of the Mediterranean farm, based on literary evidence for Italy, must form a basis for our understanding of farming in these areas in general in the Empire, though it must be appreciated that it is the advice of the agronomist that we are reading, not necessarily a description of the practical techniques. Within the same general pattern, the Mediterranean provinces developed their own distinctive features. Gallia Narbonensis, already relatively well developed, quickly acquired a sophisticated, villa-based agriculture with extensive areas of corn growing and vineyards, olive and fruit, on the belt of land between the coastal marsh and the interior hills, with perhaps more mixed-based farming in interior valleys. Spain, renowned early in the Roman world for its fertility, produced corn, wine and oil on its good land on the east and south coastal strips and its oil soon surpassed that of Italy in quality. The prosperity of Sicily and Sardinia continued with large areas of corn, grown for export to Rome, vines and fruit near the few urban centres, and pasture in the interior; there is evidence for the increase in Sicily, at least, in the growth of large estates which were devoted to profitable, large-scale ranching, matching a decline in cereal production and the consequent decline in cities which had grown up as markets for arable crops (White, 1967b, 75). Greece, moreover, was in decline and, as a general rule, cultivated land was slowly being relegated to pasture which even then was understocked (Stevens, 1966, 95). However, there was agglomeration of land into estates for olive plantations and pasture, while the cities still provided markets for the corn, oil and wine produced on the better land. Thrace and Macedonia, Upper and Lower Moesia remained relatively undeveloped, though large estates were built

up; prosperous farms have been excavated, especially near the frontier, where military needs had to be met. Development of large estates and villas of considerable wealth in the plains of Pannonia was particularly noticeable and there is evidence of drainage works to create arable land, and large-scale vine planting in the later Empire, as part of an imperial policy of developing agriculture in the province, so that it was able to export grain to north Italian markets (Mocsy, 1974, 266, 272, 298–9). Pastoralism was especially important in the lower Danube provinces. In Dalmatia the coastal area and valleys, with their fertile soils, responding to the stimulus of the Roman urbanization programme, received many immigrants from Italy from an early period. Cereal growing was important in the villas of the coastal belt, mixed farming developed in the somewhat later farms of the valleys, but the vast upland, hinterland proved unattractive to Roman settlement and remained largely undeveloped, with the peasant population continuing the same mixed or pastoral farming as before (Wilkes, 1969, 337). In the Alpine provinces of Noricum and Raetia, pasture was dominant, though cereals and fruit were grown on medium-sized estates in the valleys and plains (Alföldy, 1974, 119, 107–8).

Mediterranean farming techniques were practised in north Africa, Egypt and Syria, though these also had distinctive characteristics, largely due to their earlier economic development. Within the previous Carthaginian area of northern Africa, much of the province was parcelled out to Italian colonizers and large estates quickly grew up; Pliny indeed relates that in Nero's day six men owned half of Africa. Pliny and Columella bewail the ruinous nature of the large estate, but seem primarily to be talking about Italy, and the inevitable rural depopulation that they caused. In Africa, at least, they certainly were not unprofitable (White, 1967b). Previous corn lands continued in cereal production, generally the wetter areas nearer the coast, but olive production was, with irrigation, extended to the edge of the desert. The same was true of the undeveloped areas to the west of the old Carthaginian lands; they were subject to rapid development by investors from both Italy and Africa. Some huge estates grew up, though the abundant remains of numbers of small olive farms are scattered haphazardly in the countryside; they are surrounded by hillsides carefully terraced to increase arable land and to guard against soil erosion, and are a reminder that the basic unit, as run by tenants, would not necessarily have been large, and indeed most are starkly utilitarian when compared with villas in Europe (Percival, 1976, 63, and Goodchild, 1976, 6). One of the most impressive achievements of Roman agriculture in north Africa was doubtless the distribution of olive farms with their distinctive presses,

which are liberally scattered over land that is now desert (Goodchild, 1976, 8). In fact this extension of farming seems to have been a second-hand achievement, being brought about by either Roman encouragement or compulsion of the hitherto nomadic peoples to accept agriculture (settled people are easier to administer) and their consequent introduction of the olive (Tenney Frank, 1962, 450–1) into these marginal areas. Cultivation depended on the skill with which farmers terraced the wadi beds and built catchment walls along their sides to prevent soil erosion. The wadi beds could retain sufficient moisture to make possible the cultivation of cereals, dates and even vines (Goodchild, 1976, 6) while elsewhere the olive was cultivated.

The same is true of the desert margins of Syria, where the remains of olive presses survive (Hitti, 1951, 293), while Transjordan, now mostly desert, was a land abounding in crops to Josephus; the plains produced dates, grapes and olives and used reservoirs for rainfall storage. Irrigation played a part in this extension of agriculture, and a series of inscriptions from southern Numidia record a concern with the allocation of water to a large number of local farms, some of which were above the level of the flow, which implies a mechanical means of lifting water (White, 1970, 158). Small-scale terracing and large masonry dams for water control and soil retention were constructed and huge underground cisterns for rain storage still survive. The principles of irrigation were certainly recognized before the Romans, for example, in Mauretania (Lawless, 1969, 81), the Negev, and, of course, pre-eminently in Egypt where canals had been constructed to take the water from the annual Nile flood to basins bounded by dykes, and then return it at a lower level by outfall channels. Maintenance of this system was vital, and the work was carried out by compulsory peasant labour. Providing the system was maintained, the soil, irrigated and refertilized by deposition of the silt, was very productive and could tolerate an annual cropping almost unique in the Mediterranean. In the first century AD, Egypt contributed about one third of the wheat which Rome needed (Stevens, 1966, 103).

The Near Eastern provinces were divided either into city territories, some of which, such as that of Antioch, covered vast areas, or into non-urbanized lands in which there were blocks of imperial holdings and islands of private or temple lands. As elsewhere, the increased markets, the new road systems and security boosted agricultural production; the coastal belts produced cereals, mainly wheat, although rice, which requires irrigation, was occasionally grown, with the same legumes and cattle fodder as in Italy. Papyrus was grown in some areas for writing material,

and flax, hemp and cotton were grown all over western Asia. The irrigated gardens of Syria were well known, producing peas, beans, cabbage and radish of high quality; Pliny also refers to the importance of Syrian trees, the plum and jujube, date, pistachio, fig, cedar, juniper, terebinth (for medical oils) and sumac (for tanning). The coastal areas produced vines and olives and Syrian wine was of high quality. Labour on the city territory and on estates was the village peasant and the Gospels give us a clear picture of the poverty of such people, whether they were free tenants or hired labourers rather than land-tied serfs, which, in theory, they were. The Gospels indicate that pastoralism based on sheep and goats was also important. It would be wrong to suggest, despite the growth of large-scale estates in Africa, Egypt and the east, that romanization spread evenly across these areas. As elsewhere, large areas of less fertile or mountain country dependent on a pastoral economy would have been largely untouched.

Outside the Mediterranean area, the northern part of Gaul and Britain with their wetter climates were free of the restrictions of dry farming, but were also, of course, out of the climatic zone of the olive; Britain in the main was also out of the optimum zone for the vine. Both Gaul and Britain, but especially Gaul were heavily populated by villas, intensively settled on the low-lying arable land (Percival, 1976, 67–82, 91–105), and all the provinces, able to sustain permanent pasture, were important for animal husbandry, especially the upland areas. Strabo mentions that Britain exported grain in pre-Roman times and Caesar notes the cereal production of Kent likening it to that of the Gallic peoples. Intensive villa settlement in Gaul hugs the fertile low lying soils suitable for cereal growing and/or vine cultivation, especially near towns and rivers, but it is markedly absent from poorer or upland areas. The medium-sized mixed farm was probably the norm with the area around Bordeaux then, as now, more specialized in viticulture, producing high quality vines. Large estates were common, and it is interesting that it is in central Gaul with its topography more conducive than the Mediterranean in general to large, flat, stone-free arable fields that we hear from Pliny of two radical inventions, the harvesting machine and the wheeled plough. The *valius*, or *carpentum*, was a harvesting machine referred to in literature (Pliny, *Natural History*, XVIII, 296 and Palladius, *De Re Rustica*, 7, 2, 2–4) and shown on various monuments. It appears in two forms, a light version pushed by a donkey ([pl. 18.2](#)) and a heavier form pushed by an ox, and would cut the grain at mid-stalk level with iron teeth. While economical in labour, it would have been wasteful of grain, as it would inevitably miss cutting short stalks, and of straw, as the advancing

animal would trample over it (White, 1967a and 1969). Of the invention of the wheeled plough it is only known that a plough with two small wheels and a spade-shaped share was in use in Pliny's day in Raetia. All the available evidence (Rees, 1979, 42–69) suggests that the north European plough of the Roman period was the beam type more suitable for the heavier and wetter soils, and finds of iron shares and coulter point to a developing sophistication and strength through the Roman era (fig. 18.2). The north European plough, unlike the Mediterranean, needed to be able to deal with a weed-covered, heavy fallowed soil; fixed, winged shares found from fourth-century contexts in Britain even suggest, but by no means prove, the use of the mouldboard to invert the sod by this period. Ploughs could certainly be 'eared' presumably for ridging or drainage, as shown on the model from Piercebridge (fig. 18.1). Other than this rather heavier plough and the invention of the *vallus*, implements were similar to those used in Italy, with a good selection of spades, hoes and mattocks, reaping and pruning hooks, rakes and scythes (Rees, 1979, *passim*), with the viticulture knife markedly present in south and central Gallic villas, but absent from British sites despite the possibility that the vine was grown in Britain on a limited scale (Applebaum, 1972, 103 ; Williams, 1977 and Jones, 1981, 97). There is some suggestion of an increased importance of stock husbandry in some areas of Britain in later periods (Frere, 1978, 274–5; Lambrick and Robinson, 1979, 136–7), and the Roman introduction of the scythe and the technique of well digging must have facilitated it, though specialized pastoral units are well attested in pre-Roman periods. The scythe and billhook are important tools in the Roman-British repertoire, the latter associated with cutting winter fodder for cattle, the former, to judge by experiments with modern reproductions (Anstee, 1967, 365), either for grain or hay cutting. Two types of scythe are known: one of normal length and one extraordinarily long type (Rees, 1979) which, appearing only in Britain, may again have been an invention in response to a desire for labour-saving implements in the northern provinces (fig. 18.4 and pl. 18.1).

Villas in Britain are concentrated on the lighter soils, especially where they adjoin fertile, but difficult, clay lands, in the south-east. Their fields are often identical to the small, squarish pre-Roman fields but larger, long, narrow fields, suggesting better ploughs and increased production, can sometimes be seen to replace them. Spelt, emmer, barley (naked and hulled), oats, bread and club wheat and rye were grown, as in the Iron Age, but later rye and club wheat appear with greater frequency and spelt becomes a principal crop (Jones, 1981). Oats were established as a cultivated grain and their particular importance in the north suggests a

response to military requirements for horse fodder (Applebaum, 1972, 108–9). Beans, peas, vetch, flax, corn spurry and turnips were grown as field crops, while parsnips, peas, cabbage, mustard and herbs, and possibly radish, onions and leeks were grown in kitchen gardens with a good selection of fruits in orchards. The presence of typically spring sown and winter sown grains found together has led Applebaum to suggest that a three course rotation may have been practised - winter crop - summer crop - fallow (Applebaum, 1972, 113–14), while the existence of legumes in cereal assemblages also suggests rotation (Jones, 1981, 113).

Britain and Gaul are no exception to the norm in that they seem to have had imperial estates, and had an increasing trend toward larger estates especially by the fourth century. As elsewhere it seems that it was mostly by incentive, provided by new markets, and necessity caused by taxation, rents and or requisitioning for the army, that agriculture was boosted; large-scale drainage work in the Fens to reclaim agricultural land, and an increase in the variety and number of tools available, including the rare donkey and watermill, must have helped in their different ways. The increased range of tools is also found on upland native farms and while less romanized areas probably carried on with the same mixed or pastoral farming as before, it is doubtful if they were entirely unaffected by the Roman presence. Indeed it was largely in such areas that the frontiers lay with their considerable numbers to be fed. As it is probable that much of the necessary food for the army would have been taken locally to avoid transport costs (Manning, 1974), the impact of this increased need on the local farmers must have been tremendous. Presumably the decline in demand when the army was withdrawn from an area must have been equally keenly felt.

Though the third-century decline in agriculture generally is seen in Gaul and Britain, in Britain at least there is a good recovery in the fourth century. The success of the corn-producing areas of Britain would seem to have continued, and Julian used British produce to feed the starving cities of the Rhine in 360 (Applebaum, 1972, 230). Corn-drying furnaces are found everywhere in fourth-century farms, often inserted ruthlessly into dwellings. Some of the furnaces are as early as the second century, but in the fourth they became very common, a response probably to the climate becoming somewhat wetter. The drying process makes grain easier to grind and also prolongs its power of germination (Morris, 1979, 5–22, but for a different interpretation see Reynolds, 1981, 36–43).

Finally something should be said of the part which agricultural produce played in commerce and trade ([Part 8](#)). Wheat was early imported to Rome

from Sicily, North Africa and Egypt by the imperial government, but general transport of cereals was avoided because of the prohibitive costs, especially by road; Jones calculates that in Diocletian's time a waggon-load of wheat would have doubled in value over 480 km (300 miles) (Jones, 1964, 841). Accordingly, except in times of famine when extraordinary measures had to be taken, corn, fruit and vegetables were not transported long distances to markets but were grown nearer the source of need, be it urban or military. Wine and oil, however, were more valuable in proportion to their bulk and early played an important part in trade. The Italian products first dominated, but were later overtaken by Gaul, Spain and Syria in high quality wines, and by Spain and Africa in olive oil. Flax tended to be manufactured into cloth before marketing, so its value increased (Jones, 1964, 850) and linen from Antioch and Spain was exported to Italy. Apart from this, only high value agricultural goods covered long distances, such as choice wine from Palestine and Syria, dried fruits, exotic spices and medicinal and aromatic herbs from western Asia.



18.1 Reconstructed hafting of a copy of a Roman scythe from Great Chesterford



18.2 A harvesting machine shown on a relief from Montaubon



18.3 Animals used on a modern threshing-floor at Santorini



18.4 Representations of olive and grape harvests on a mosaic from St-Romain-en-Gal: (a) olive picking; (b) grape picking; (c) grape pressing; (d) proofing storage jars with pitch

· ANIMAL · HUSBANDRY ·

Shimon Applebaum

Our knowledge of the animal husbandry of the Roman Empire is derived from two main sources, namely, written material and archaeology. The written sources fall into three categories: Roman works on agriculture and some sources in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic; epigraphic material, and papyrology. The *Georgica* of Vergil and the writings of the *Scriptores Rustici* (Cato, Varro, Columella, Palladius) deal almost exclusively with Italy, but occasionally refer to agriculture outside the peninsula. Pliny in his *Natural History* pays more attention to extra-Italian farming. The geographer Strabo has useful notes on stock-farming in various parts of the Empire. The *Geoponica*, written perhaps in the seventh century, has occasional useful observations. The Mishnah and the Talmud (late second and early fifth century AD respectively) have much to say on agriculture in Judaea. Epigraphy provides inscriptions here and there which illuminate fitfully the management of livestock (most of them belong to Asia Minor and Africa). The *Edict on Prices* of Diocletian contains important notices of food and materials derived from the livestock of the Empire. Papyrology furnishes a mass of information on the agriculture of Egypt for the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine periods. The Arabic *Kitab-al-Felaha* (perhaps twelfth century) was very largely based on Roman work, much of it from the *Geoponica*.

Archaeology's contribution lies mainly in the data to be derived from animal bones recovered from excavated sites; the value and problems of this area of research will be discussed below (p. 516). Other evidence furnished by archaeology includes the identification of byres and stables, and the illustration of domestic animals on coins, wall-paintings, mosaics,

sculptured monuments and other forms of art.

The principal questions which this chapter will attempt to answer are: (1) what were the standards and methods of animal husbandry in the Roman period in Italy and in other parts of the Empire; (2) how far did Roman animal husbandry influence the provinces both in the Mediterranean zone and in the temperate regions ruled by Rome; (3) in what way and how were domestic animals and their products utilized by the Romans; (4) which domestic animals can be recognized in the Empire, and to what extent was improvement of livestock attempted or effected?

It will be useful to list given areas under Roman rule which were well known for the rearing of certain domestic animals. Each domestic animal, therefore, will be treated in turn, and following the brief account of its distribution in the Empire, the conduct of its branch as described by the Italian agricultural writers of the imperial epoch will be briefly recapitulated.

Cattle

Ranching of cattle was prominent in southern Italy, Etruria, Umbria and Latium, and continued in southern Italy throughout the Empire. Very large cattle ranches existed in Sicily. Cisalpine cattle were regarded by Varro as the best in Italy. Italy, indeed, owed much to the east in this sphere, particularly in the form of fodders (clover, sesame, fenugreek and lucerne) which eased the problem of winter feed; there was also benefit from the professional literature written by Carthaginian and Greek authors living under progressive hellenistic rulers.

In Greece, Epirote cows were known as record milkers and imported into southern Italy. Arcadia, Thessaly and Euboea were all well known as cattle-rearing regions. Almost every excavated site in Dalmatia has yielded cow-bells, which testify to open-range pasturing. Cattle were generally the largest group of animals whose remains were to be found in Pannonia, also in the Greek cities on the north shore of the Euxine in the Roman period. Central European investigators are agreed that the Romans introduced a larger type of cattle into Raetia, Noricum and Pannonia. In Asia Minor, Pontus, Galatia, Samos and Phrygia were known for their cattle; Pergamum had been the centre of parchment manufacture since the hellenistic period. Diocletianic inscriptions recording the census of human occupants and livestock in Asia and in some of the Aegean islands, on the other hand, do

not suggest the maintenance of cattle on a large scale.

In Syria the pastures of Antioch were noted and Apamea was renowned for its cattle, as was Bashan (Batanea); Strabo refers to the large oxen bred at Petra. The importance of cattle husbandry in Judaea is confirmed by talmudic literature and has been revealed by archaeology. At Tell Heshbon (Hesbân), however, the proportion of cattle fell in the hellenistic and Roman periods, recovered in the later Roman strata, but never competed with the ovicaprids. The Mishnah gives the limit of grazing, free-range cattle as sixteen Roman miles.

Cattle in Egypt had been improved by the systematic breeding of the Ptolemies, as demonstrated in the Fayum, and herds were held in considerable numbers; the Roman conquest perpetuated these methods. In summer the stock was fed extensively on green fodder but from January to February grazed on open pasture sown the previous year. Cattle rearing was the earliest basis of agriculture in ancient Cyrene, and various ancient authors mention the country's herds, reared more particularly in the plain of Barca. The Carthaginian nobility had reared cattle; other stockmen are recorded specifically in an inscription at Sala in Mauretania. The cattle of the Spanish city of Gades were known to be rich in milk, and the bull is figured on coins of several Roman towns in Spain.

The abundance of cattle in Gaul is demonstrated by the ease with which Julius Caesar revictualled his forces with corn and cattle. On French archaeological sites cattle are often the largest group represented; Strabo states that the country was rich in beasts, emphasizing the large herds of the Belgae, yet in several Gallic villas beef was less frequently consumed than pork. Cattle, however, were predominant on Roman sites in Holland, which was administratively an adjunct of Gaul. Cattle rearing was clearly a developed branch in the early Iron Age in this area, and the Frisii paid their tribute to Rome in ox-hides.

Military concentrations along the Rhine frontier and in south Germany furnished without doubt a strong incentive to the Roman hinterland to supply beef and hides to the army. The increase in the size of cattle in this area during the Roman period is regarded by Willerding as a local development, and a number of villas such as Köln-Müngersdorf possessed generous accommodation for stalled cattle.

Cattle-rearing is generally held to have increased in Britain in the later Roman period, and is predominant on most military sites. Improvement produced animals larger than those normal in the British early Iron Age, but the smaller types persisted.

For the farmer of Italy, whether a smallholder or the owner of a large

estate, the ox was the most important animal; but the former might yoke a cow or a donkey to his plough. Two hundred and forty *iugera* (c. 60 ha; 150 acres) needed six oxen, a vineyard of a hundred *iugera*, two oxen. The average Italian estate owner, moreover, was well aware of the importance of livestock as an integral part of mixed farming, and of its value both as an earner of income and as a fertilizer. Cattle, therefore, were valued both for work (pls 19.1, 19.2 and 19.3) and for their manure, but much less for their milk. It is generally held that meat was not widely eaten in the Mediterranean area until the later Empire, but the rapid spread of large-scale ranching in Italy in the second century BC suggests that this view requires reassessment. The estate herd was normally grazed in the fields in both summer and winter, though they might be corralled. The bulls were kept apart, and working cattle and cows in calf were generally brought in at night, and often stalled. Large-scale ranching, which developed with the rise in wealth and capitalist initiative, as Rome acquired new possessions in Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, was conducted as an independent enterprise unintegrated into the agricultural pattern, and involved extensive transhumance. It was normal practice in the 'mixed' agricultural estate to burn the grass at the end of summer to encourage fresh growth, an operation which might bring immediate advantage, but tended to destroy soil fertility. Feeding livestock in winter and early spring was a standing problem which compelled the owner, when his fresh forage and hay had given out, to feed beech mast, grape-skins and even leaves and chaff. Legumes and fenugreek, vetch and lucerne, reaching Italy from the east, did much, although apparently not enough, to solve the problem.

The Roman cattle breeder was aware of the need to improve his animals, but proceeded on the mistaken premise that the female alone determined the characteristics of her progeny. He was alert to the influence of environment, and Columella consequently advised that herds be replenished by breeds from near or similar regions. Varro and Columella mention the small white cattle of Campania, large Umbrian white cattle, the powerful breeds of Etruria and Latium, and the thick-set Apennine oxen. Carian cattle, Epirote milch stock and the small sturdy Altinum oxen of the Ligurian Alps, are known to have been imported into Italy.

Varro recommends that cows should not be mated till they were two or even four years old, and Columella rules that in the absence of abundant fodder they should be mated only every second year; if these prescriptions were applied, they would have limited the female stock to six or even as few as three pregnancies in their entire life-time.

The Roman stockman had well-worked out procedures, not all of them

gentle, for breaking in oxen for ploughing or traction, but considerable care was taken to reduce injuries, whether in the field or on the road. Columella devotes a very long section of his work to veterinary remedies, and the devoted care in his treatment contrasts with the occasional folk superstitions that pass for remedies; colic could be cured by the sight of ducks, wrung withers were remedied by bleeding the hind quarters, bites by the shrewmouse were to be prevented by hanging the body of that creature round the ox's neck. The standards of Varro and Columella were high, but, even if there was much careful and systematic farming in the Empire, it must, notwithstanding, be remembered that both wrote first and foremost for the educated, even the aristocratic reader, and that their practices applied essentially to Italy and to the Mediterranean environment.

The stalling of cattle, at least of the working oxen and cows in calf, is clearly implied by Columella. Vitruvius treats of byres, and even the smallholder's humble farmhouse at Monte Forco in the Ager Capenas contained accommodation for a few head. The byre at the villa of Köln-Müngersdorf (198 head) has been referred to, and ample accommodation for wintering cattle is to be seen at Marburg (Hessen), in Germany. Systematic stalling of cattle in the Dutch farms began as early as the fifth century BC, and persisted throughout and beyond the Roman period. Byres can be identified in villas in Germany, Belgium and Britain, where the villa of Thistleton Dyer (Rutland) possessed accommodation for over fifty head approximately. Obviously the severer conditions of the northern winter made stalling more essential, but at least one of the villas studied in the vicinity of Pompeii provided planned accommodation for that purpose.

Sheep (plates 19.2, 19.4 and 19.5)

If cattle were important for the production of meat, hides and horn, and to a limited extent of butter and cheese, sheep were of fundamental importance for their wool, which provided the commonest clothing material of the entire Empire. But in contrast to today, sheep were also the chief source of milk and cheese, and, in the Mediterranean world, cows' milk was little regarded.

The great producers of wool in Italy were concentrated on the drier eastern side of the peninsula, in the south at Canusium, Venusia, also in Apulia, Calabria and Tarentum and in the north in the valley of the Po at Mutina, Padua, Brixia and Parma, at Aquileia, and Altinum in Liguria. But

Sicily also ran sheep on a large scale, Sardinia and Corsica abounded in pasture, while on the westerly slopes of the Apennines, Etruria, Samnium and Campania also were known for their flocks. Apulian sheep, in fact, were driven to summer pasture in Samnium in late republican days; such long-range transhumance persisted under the Empire and was common also in Calabria, Umbria, the Abruzzi and Campania. In Diocletian's *Edict on Prices* imperial weaving mills are recorded at Rome, Aquileia, Milan, Canusium and Venusia. The finest wool was ascribed to Tarentum, famous for its sheep which, imported from Miletus, were wrapped up in winter to protect their expensive fleeces. Other imperial mills existed in Illyricum at Bassianae, Sermium, Iovia, Liburnia and Histria.

Noricum was named *regio pastorum* by Vergil, while inscribed seals from Magdalensburg named four woollen exports from that province. Poetovio (Pannonia) found similar mention in Diocletian's tariff. The most productive pastoral areas of Greece under the Empire were Argolis, Achaea, Arcadia, Euboea, Attica, and Boeotia. Achaea, indeed, was famous for its woollen cloaks (*chlainai*). Thrace also was active in this branch, producing woollen *himatia*, and the Thracian imperial mill was at Heraclea. The Dacian uplands bear ample archaeological evidence of active sheep rearing. Spain exported wool to Rome, and Columella's uncle improved fleeces by crossing African sheep imported into Gades with Tarentines. Gaul wore and exported woollen garments from a number of areas.

Britain's imperial weaving mill was at Venta, whose location is disputed (Winchester or Caister St Edmund), and Diocletian's *Edict* names rugs and capes as British exports; Eumenius praises the country's innumerable sheep 'loaded with fleeces'.

Africa possessed an active weaving industry, and Diocletian's *Edict* records African woollen covers and cloaks, also clothing from Numidia; the imperial weaving mill was at Carthage. Egypt owed the systematic development of its sheep rearing to the Ptolemies, who retained much of it as a royal enterprise and supplied stock to tenants and landholders. They also improved the flocks by importing sheep from Miletus, Arabia; Euboea and Ethiopia. Under Rome the Egyptian wool industry supplied clothing to the army as far afield as Judaea and Cappadocia, and a prime factor in the success of the branch was the planned cultivation of sown pasture.

Judaea was topographically better suited to flocks than herds, and the Old Testament alone is sufficient to establish the prevalence of sheep and goats. The Babylonian Talmud recommended the rearing of both as highly profitable. At Tell Hesbân, the only excavated site in the region, there was a decline of ovicaprids in the hellenistic and Roman periods, but they later

recovered and always remained the largest group. It also seems probable that the truly fine wool so coveted in the Empire was first developed in Judaea or in the vicinity, since samples dated to the fourth century BC have been found at Wadi Daliyeh cave, and others dated to the second century AD in the refuges of the Judaeian Wilderness. Strabo may be writing of this particular breed of sheep when he mentions the white-woolled sheep of the Nabataeans. The fat-tailed sheep is referred to more than once in the Mishnah. What has been said of Judaea also applied to Syria. Damascus was renowned for its textiles, an imperial weaving mill being located at Tyre. Other centres of weaving were Byblos and Beyruth.

The largest supplier of wool was certainly Asia Minor. The hellenistic kings of Pergamum, Galatia and Commagene, as well as the Seleucids, were actively interested in agriculture, and doubtless promoted sheep-breeding and wool production; it should not be forgotten that parchment was first made at Pergamum. Miletus long dominated the weaving trade, but in the Roman period lost ground to Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae. Bithynia, Pontus, Phrygia, Galatia, Pisidia, Cappadocia and Lycaonia were all producers of woollen goods, and several guilds of weavers, dyers and fullers are known, some of which appear to have been regarded as fundamental units of their cities' constitutions. The *Edict* of Diocletian lists hoods, mantles, short and long cloaks, undergarments and tunics, all manufactured in the above territories. Imperial weaving establishments were to be found at Cyzicus and Caesarea Mazaca.

It becomes clear that the wool industry was one of the widest and most active in the Empire, the more so if it is taken into account that many poorer families spun their own wool and that it was usual on villa estates for slaves' garments to be made on the estate itself. But where the large textile centres were concerned, it may be assumed that they were located in those areas most fitted for the rearing of sheep.

Sheep produce wool, meat, milk, hides and horn. It is therefore not surprising that there are more records of sheep in Egypt than there are of cattle, and that they were in a majority at Hesbân and Jericho, in country where ovicaprids can survive in semi-desert regions but cattle cannot. In Europe sheep tend to dominate in small native settlements and some villas, but for the most part one of the results of Roman influence was the preferred consumption of beef, especially in the towns and on military sites. It is notable, however, that the *Edict* of Diocletian lists ewes' milk but has nothing to say of the milk of cows.

Columella lists several varieties of sheep, the Milesian, the Altinum, the Apennine and those from the Po valley, but his only account of cross-

breeding is that of his uncle Marcus, who crossed African rams with Tarentine and ultimately obtained a soft-woolled sheep of the right colour, the most sought-after probably being white. In Italy sheep might be restricted to the farm, or run on a seasonal transhumant system between summer and winter pastures a hundred miles apart. A smallholder might hold a dozen head, the owner of a medium estate a hundred; long-distance transhumance was generally practised with large flocks possibly numbering thousands. The medium estate's practice depended on the ability to feed the flock in winter, and it was to the owner's advantage to graze his sheep on the stubble after harvest or in his plantations, in order to obtain manure. During the summer the flock was brought to the fold each evening. Mating time was from May to July, so that lambs were dropped between October and December. Ewes close to lambing and their offspring were kept under cover. Winter feed consisted of leaves, autumn hay, trefoil, vetch and the pods of other legumes and also barley. Lambing was followed by culling, and some of the lambs would be sold for meat if the villa was within reach of an urban market. On the other hand, long-range transhumance, run for profit by rich capitalists at the expense of the smallholder, as a practice unintegrated with productive mixed farming, tended to cause over-grazing, erosion, and soil denudation. This is probably the reason for the obstinate opposition of the Jewish scholars of Judaea to the rearing of 'small livestock' (sheep and goats) in the later first and second centuries AD. This distinctive practice, nevertheless, persisted in Italy under imperial rule. Yet archaeological survey and the excavation of a farm at Lucera revealed a successful mixed economy within a centuriated area, despite the attested long-distance transhumance between the Apennines and Apulia in the same region; this can only be explained as the result of imperial intervention and control.

Goats (plates 19.2 and 19.11)

The goat, which is capable of flourishing in rough country, is highly productive in milk because the female can reproduce twice a year; the gestation period is five months, and the milk-yield relative to the body weight is three times that of the cow and four times that of the ewe. The male is thought fit for mating at eighteen months. The goat, however, is highly susceptible to changes of temperature and to epidemics. Goats produce cheese, fat for soap, and hair from which cloaks, carpets, ropes and

tent-yarns were made; skins also provided parchment. Columella's account appears to refer to the black variety, and he regards a hundred head as the optimum. Goats and sheep are normally grazed together in the Middle East, but on the classical Italian farm, at least, the goats were folded separately. The goat browses on trees and shrubs, and is consequently a destroyer of woodland cover if herded in large numbers and freely grazed; the emperor Valerian, notwithstanding, is alleged to have possessed 10,000 sheep and 15,000 goats on his estate. One of the most prolific centres for the manufacture of goat-hair products was Asia Minor (especially Cilicia), but goats were to be found in all the provinces.

The Pig (plate 19.2)

Unlike some other domestic animals, the pig furnishes nothing but meat and fat. Pork became the popular meat of the Empire and of its army, although not the most eaten; lard was an integral item of army rations, and in the third century the citizen of Rome received five pounds of free pork each month. Originally a forest animal, in Roman times the pig was still closely associated with woods, and could be kept out of doors most of the year. Although pigs are not in the habit of roving, and tend to be associated with the farmstead, they were sometimes transhumed in Italy and Spain; Varro favoured a herd of a hundred. As the pig matures in twelve months, and the sow's gestation lasts only five, it can breed twice a year, if the young are removed. Styling for fattening was certainly practised in the north-west of the Empire; sties have been identified at several villas in Britain, and at Köln-Müngersdorf in Germany. The bones of a pig which had died in the pen before its empty feeding bowl were found at the Roman villa of Lullingstone, Kent. Pig bones have also been excavated at Kurnub (Mampsis) in the northern Negev, where pigs could only have been reared in pens. Pens are required by Columella at least for farrowing, and are implicit in his recommendation to feed with grain and legumes in case of a food shortage. Pens are further mentioned in Egyptian papyri, and Egypt supplied salt pork and piglets to the army. The Cerretani and Cantabri of Spain were noted for their hams, as were the Sequani of central Gaul, the Menapii and the Belgae, also the Italian Marsi. The price of Lucanian pork sausages was listed by Diocletian, while the Po valley people sold pork to Rome. In Asia, Assos was famed for its white boars.

Horses (plates 19.3 and 19.6)

Horses played little part in the agriculture of the Roman Empire; they were used for war, for drawing light vehicles, for riding and for chariot racing. On the farm, nevertheless, they were sometimes used for threshing, and horses are illustrated drawing ploughs among the cultivators of North Africa. More important, finds of numerous horse- and cattle-bones together suggest that horses were used to round up free-range cattle, and a Gallic source supports this interpretation. If they were not extensively used for haulage, it may have been owing to the ancient method of harnessing, which constricted the horse's breathing, but some scholars object to this generalization (pl. 19.7). It also seems to be accepted that horses were sometimes used as pack animals. Mares were important as the breeders of mules, which were much favoured in the Empire. In Italy, the chief centres of horse-rearing were at Reate in the central Apennines, in the Po valley, in south-eastern Apulia, Calabria and Sicily. Elsewhere they were to be found in Greece, Epirus, Apamea of Syria, and in the Antioch region; and more especially in Arcadia and Aetolia, which contributed stock to the races at Rome. Arab horses are referred to in the Talmud, and Noricum too sent its horses to the Roman games. The imperial army drew much of its cavalry from Spain, Gaul, Illyricum, the Taurus and Thrace, while in the later Empire the famous studs of Palmatius in Cappadocia came under imperial control. Africa bred notable horses, and Cyrene, renowned for its bloodstock, was still exporting them in the late fourth century. Horse-rearing had been thoroughly organized by the Ptolemies in Egypt, assisted by the cultivation of sown pasture and green fodders. In the Byzantine period the large Apion estates maintained extensive stables for postal services and the estate inspectors.

The Roman agricultural writers distinguished between the breeding of bloodstock and the rearing of working horses. The most favourable areas were considered to be high, well-watered plainlands carrying grass pasture, for instance, the Spanish Maseta. The stock was kept out at pasture for most of the year, but stabled in cold or wet weather and fed on hay. Much attention was given to dry stabling. Columella prescribes one stallion to serve twenty mares; the working horses were grazed with the stallions, but pedigree animals were kept separate except when selective breeding was required; mating was preferably at the spring equinox; breaking-in of foals began at the end of the third year. Finds suggest that the iron horseshoe had already been introduced during the Empire, but its use may not have been common.

Mules (plate 19.7)

The mule is the offspring of a mare by an ass. The mule was used primarily as a draught and pack animal, since it is known for its pulling power and its agility in rough or mountainous country. It also possesses greater endurance than the horse, hence it served as the chief transport animal of the army. Because of its smoother gait it was utilized in Roman society to draw the coaches of aristocrats (Nero and Poppaea used them), also to bear ladies' litters. Judah the Prince, the official president of world Jewry, in the later second century, also used them to draw his carriage. In the pre-desertic zone of north Africa the mule seems to have been used for ploughing. To rear a male ass which could sire a well-bred mule, it was the practice to attach the young ass to a mare foster mother, and the young animal was sent to mate after its fourth year. The extent to which mules were utilized in the Empire is reflected in the *Edict* of Diocletian, which refers to the rations to be paid to mule drivers and to professional *mulio-medici*. Arcadian mules were well-known, and Justus of Antioch (Syria) was alleged to have possessed a thousand of them. Mules were numerous in Egypt, were imported from Libya into Judaea, and are illustrated on monuments in Gaul and Pannonia. In the Black Sea cities they appear to have been commoner than horses. They were widely bred in Asia Minor, and certainly played an important part in the imperial transport service.

Donkeys (plate 19.8)

Columella lists the donkey among the animals of the highest utility. The ass can exist on the roughest natural pastures, is seldom sick, and exerts great strength in proportion to its size. It is still the combined wheelbarrow, handcart and bicycle of the Mediterranean peasant. It is reported to have pulled the plough in Baetica and Libya. On the farm, the ass carried manure to the plantations and brought back the produce to be processed. It was used to turn the grain mill, and probably also the rotating olive press. It further carried the smallholder's produce to the local market. The extensive network of ancient rural roads recently discovered in Samaria, existed in the hellenistic and Roman periods and were virtually unpaved; there is little doubt that one of their uses was the transport of local agricultural produce chiefly by mules and donkeys. Indeed, donkey-trains carried oil and wine between Brundisium and Apulia.

Donkeys were extensively bred in the central Apennines and in Arcadia; they were also part of the Ptolemaic transport organization in Egypt, where under Rome they continued to carry the *annona*, as well as operating irrigation machinery. They are mentioned frequently by the customs tariff of Palmyra as carriers of goods. The ass did not thrive in the more northerly provinces, but is found in La Tène contexts in western Gaul, and in Roman times in Britain at Newstead.

Dogs (plate 19.3)

Columella classed dogs by a broad distinction of functions: yard dogs which guarded villas, and those that herded the livestock and were also good hunters. Other Greek and Latin sources distinguished large watchdogs, hunting dogs and pets. Greece, where dog breeding was known in the fourth century, seems to have been the most prolific source of the domestic dog; in this as in other ways Italy profited from eastern Mediterranean influences in the hellenistic period, spreading perhaps via Sicily, where the dogs of Panormus, Segesta and Eryx were noted. Best known were the Molossian mastiff, the Laconian hound and the smaller hounds of Crete and Sicily. Calabria, Tyrrhenia and Umbria bred shepherd dogs and smaller types for herding and hunting. Caria, Sarmatia, Thrace, Spain, Pannonia and Libya produced their own breeds. Gaul originated the *vertragus*, renowned for speed and perhaps of greyhound type; Britain a famous mastiff credited with the strength to break a bull's neck and therefore favoured in Italy not only as a watchdog, but also for its performance in the arena. The seven formidable 'scottish' dogs sent as a gift to Symmachus (340-c. 402) were, of course, Irish; unfortunately we have no clue as to their appearance. The fashionable cult of small lap dogs was a product of the increased leisure furnished by imperial wealth.

The camel (plate 19.9)

The camel, surprisingly, was not confined to the eastern provinces or to Africa. It only became frequent in Egypt in the hellenistic period, and did not penetrate further westward till the third century AD. It was, naturally, first and foremost a carrier of man and merchandise in pre-desertic areas, but also served in more clement regions; both the heavy two-humped

Bactrian and the slenderer dromedary were used, the former for heavy loads. The first *ala* of *dromedarii* known was recruited by Trajan, and in the second century camel-borne troops are found attached to an infantry unit in Egypt, presumably for dispatches and scouting. In the fourth century we hear of three camel units in Egypt and two others, one in Palestine and another in Arabia. Under Severus camels were introduced into north Africa. They were also used for army transport in Roman Europe; their bones have been found at Lorenzburg, Breisgau and Vermania in Germany, at Windisch (Vindonissa) in Gaul, in Epfach (Abodiacum) in Raetia, at Vienna (Pannonia), and in the Balkans. They have also been recorded at Greenwich Park in Kent (Britain).

Poultry (plate 19.11)

Poultry, though probably important on Italian estates, was often only one of a number of species subsumed under the name of *villatica pastio*, the mass production of specialized fowl and fish for luxurious palates in a nearby urban market. Columella classifies the chief varieties of the farmyard fowl as the common or African, the Numidian and the Gallinaria. Methods of poultry breeding were evidently much influenced by hellenistic experience, and several Greek varieties are also mentioned. Cross-breeding of stock was carried out, colour being regarded as an index of fertility. Fattening of birds, sometimes by caponization, was practised, and the greatest attention was directed to the efficient and profitable production both of chicks and eggs. Columella considered 200 as the most rational flock; his account of the henhouse, to be placed east of the farmstead, is one of the most thorough in his manual. Great care was taken to provide both air and protection from marauding animals, and to prevent the sitting hen from damaging her clutch when returning to the nest, which was let into the wall. Lofts above the perches held the feed, which consisted of crushed barley, grapes, chickpea, millet, panic, bran or wild trefoil. Culling was regular, and the poultryman was enjoined to see that the eggs were regularly turned and hatching times registered. Considerable care was taken to clean and disinfect the henhouse, also to prevent the fouling of drinking troughs.

Pigeons

Breeding pigeons was almost universal in Mediterranean agriculture; they were kept for sale as a market delicacy and for their dung, which was highly esteemed. The birds were accommodated in towers or elevated lofts facing south, and cots housing as many as 5,000 are recorded. As pigeons can produce eight broods a year, they were very profitable. Turtle doves and pigeons were the most easily fattened for market, and crossbreeding of varieties (e.g. Campanian and Alexandrine) is reported. Fattened turtle doves and pigeons are listed in Diocletian's *Edict*. Pigeon rearing was carried on everywhere in Egypt, where it was usual for the birds to nest in large earthenware storage jars. In Asia, Pergamum was a well-known centre of pigeon breeding, and some temples, e.g. that of Apollo Larbenos in Phrygia, owned large numbers of these birds. Doves were sacrificed at the Temple of Jerusalem in the late Second Temple period, and Jewish scholarly literature shows that the dovecot was a normal feature of the Jewish farmstead. Finds of the bones of doves of the Roman period appear to have been few north of the Alps, but it is interesting to learn that the word for dove in British, Gallic and Breton (*colum*) was derived from the Latin word *columba*.

The goose

The goose is a northern bird which however had reached Italy by the early fourth century BC and was being reared in Egypt under the Ptolemies. The Romans preferred the white variety, but the German goose is described by Pliny. Specialists often have difficulty in distinguishing between the bones of wild and domesticated birds. While these seldom occur in large numbers on Roman sites, Pliny's reference to a peculiar variety, the *cheneros*, in Britain, suggests that new varieties of geese had spread to the north-western provinces. Geese were exported to Rome by the Morini of northern Gaul, who supplied their feathers for cushions, quills and the like; Belgic geese were herded on foot to Rome. They were also exported from Commagene. Flocks were reared in large enclosures, and the ganders enclosed in separate pens during laying and hatching; the birds were plucked twice a year. The *Edict* of Diocletian fixes the price of fattened geese, also of goose-down and of fattened *ducks*. These were kept together with wild specimens in enclosures which contained sheds for roosting and a pond in the centre. Their eggs were often given to hens to hatch, so that the chicks of wild varieties became domesticated. Distinction between the

bones of wild and domesticated ducks is difficult, but the latter have been identified in Roman contexts as far north as Britain.

Peacocks

Peacocks were reared in woodland enclosures, but allowed free access to their surroundings to feed; the hens brought up their own chicks, but the eggs were often transferred to barnyard fowl to hatch. Though not frequent in the more northerly provinces, the bones of peacocks have been found on Roman sites in Noricum, Germany and Britain.

Turning to the contribution made by zooarchaeology to knowledge of Roman animal husbandry, a complex situation has to be faced. The bibliography is enormous, the amount of work done, its quality and its accessibility, vary greatly from country to country, and there are some where, apparently, the relevant research has been lacking. Nor, as yet, is there a standard methodology of research. What follows must be regarded as a brief and imperfect initial essay, which must be treated with due reservation.

The contribution of zooarchaeology is to trace the spread of domestic and wild fauna, to establish the relative proportions of species on each given site, to discover the way the animals were utilized and, within the terms of reference of the present chapter, to determine the influence of Rome upon provincial animal husbandry. For these purposes it is desirable to determine, among other things: (1) the maximum and average size of the animals of each species; and (2) their sex and age at death, also their weights in terms of meat. Results depend to a considerable extent on the efficiency of recovery methods, which have frequently been subject to criticism and revision. Recent development has also emphasized that simple bone counts cannot reflect the relative importance of given species, and that only a part of the bone deposited can have survived to be excavated. The above qualifications must be remembered, and it has to be admitted also that a great many of the reports that are bound to be utilized were written before more recent methodological criticism.

Two further trends in this field of study should be mentioned. Recent years have seen a tendency to avoid the attempt to classify animal bones according to fixed 'breeds' or 'races'. More recent research has rejected a number of alleged original types and sees the animals concerned rather as

varieties. Second, an awareness has arisen of the need to study animal remains in relation to their rural environments, and to consider their social-economic implications. One of the most important discoveries of zooarchaeology has been to eliminate the widely-held assumption of the 'winter killing' of livestock. It was assumed until recently that lack of winter fodder in northern Europe compelled the killing of all but working and breeding cattle in the autumn. Study of animal bones from both early Iron Age and Roman sites has now shown that a high proportion of cattle survived the initial years (Ryder and Thirsk, 1981).

On examining the problem, as to how far the expansion of Roman rule resulted in the improvement of animal husbandry, the greater part of the material likely to provide an answer is connected with two species of livestock: cattle and sheep. The raising of cattle was, in most places in Europe, the greatest support of the mixed farm and of the peasant population. Cattle composed over 50 per cent of the remains at the hill-fort of Manching (Germany) occupied both in the later La Tène and early Roman periods; it was the largest section in the villas of the central European provinces, in the Greek cities of the Black Sea, and in the Roman city of Exeter; cattle rearing apparently increased steadily in the later Roman period in Britain. That most of the forts in Germany show beef as the chief meat consumed by their garrisons may have contributed to this situation. The detachment of personnel to tend legionary cattle is indeed known both in Britain and in Germany. It has further been noted that the eating of beef and mutton was most characteristic in the rural settlements of the western Roman provinces, a phenomenon which indicates their lower standard of living in contrast to the urban populations. At Tell Hesbân in Jordan, on the other hand, sheep and goats dominated except in the later early Iron Age, the hellenistic and the early Roman period. It is accordingly in the cattle sector that we would expect to find the symptoms of improvement under Roman influence. The increased size of cattle is evident from bones studied at Manching, Xanten (Ulpia Traiana) and Münsterburg-Breissach (Germany); on Dutch sites; at Hallstatt and Oviclava (Wels), in Noricum; at Szakaly-Rieti Földek (Pannonia); at Chesterholm and Corbridge (Britain), and at various other settlements and villas in the same province. It is nevertheless remarkable that the largest known shoulder height of cattle in Roman Gaul was 154.4 cm (60 in). In Britain it was only 144 cm (56.5 in). Increase in size has further been noted and attributed to Roman influence in northern Italy at Udine, Spina and various sites in the Tyrol and north-western Yugoslavia.

It is not yet agreed how far these improvements were effected by actual

import of Roman stock, by improved husbandry or by selective breeding. It should, however, be remembered that selective breeding and crossing of types were understood and practised by Roman farmers, partly as a result of hellenistic, probably also Punic influence. On the other hand, much light can be shed on the degree to which Roman influence could improve livestock conditions by the study of the outbuildings of excavated villas. A further point may be made: a comparison of British villa plans and the texts of Roman writers on agriculture has revealed a number of points in common. It may further be noted that research on Roman weaving and woollen textiles, and on ancient sheepskins has shown that the development of a fine medium wool fibre was the result of the elimination by selective breeding of the hairy 'kemps' present in the more primitive sheep. This process was already advanced in the fourth century BC in Samaria. The 'soay' sheep was probably the common type of the British early Iron Age, and it is likely that the Romans introduced the fine, white-woolled flocks, the 'soay' being then crossed with them to produce the well known Roman-British wool.

There are comparatively few known Roman sites on which sheep dominated, but one was the well excavated villa of Köln-Müngersdorf in Germany; only three known excavated villas in north-western Europe have yielded a majority of sheep bones. In most villas, forts and garrisoned points in central Europe sheep took third place; in non-urban settlements they were in second place, as with some rural sites of Gaul and Holland, and also in Exeter (Britain), where this proportion was recorded from all but one site. In Gaul sheep predominated on five known rural sites. It may be noted that Köln-Müngersdorf is estimated to have maintained at least 169 head, and Bignor, a British villa, an approximate minimum of 197 head.

The evidence for the improvement of sheep in the Empire is reasonably impressive. It has been observed that in Germany strong-horned stock appear under Roman rule, and that most specimens represent larger animals with shoulder heights of 67.1 to 71.3 cm (26.4 to 28 in). In Holland a slight increase in size has been recorded; in central European villas individuals of 84 to 88 cm (33 to 35 in) shoulder height occur. A slight increase is recorded at Exeter, and a breed larger than the widespread *Ovis aries Studeri* of the lake villages, today surviving in the Soay, has been found in Britain at Bar Hill, in Cranbourne Chase, at Hemel Hempstead, and elsewhere. A long-tailed sheep identified at Sheepen, Colchester, may be a Roman introduction. A general increase in size is also noticeable at the Roman farmstead of Barton Court, Cirencester. In later Roman Britain,

indeed, a numerical increase of cattle and a decline of the ovid population appears to have set in. As regards the problem of how the improvements were effected, either by import, conscious breeding or better husbandry (feeding and housing), doubtless all played a part; but it should be noted that Roman-influenced cattle and sheep were observed at the German *oppidum* of Manching *prior* to the Roman conquest, and it is hard to believe that the improvements implied could have been accomplished without the actual importation of stock from the south.

Something should be said of the purposes served by the two important branches of cattle and sheep-rearing. The chief indicators are the varying ages at which given groups were slaughtered. First, a high percentage of very young animals, more especially lambs butchered in their first year, may reflect early mortality, but it can also reflect the removal of young from the ewes in order to free the latter for milking. Where piglets are concerned, sucking pig was a favourite Roman dish, which would account for early killing. Adult killing implies fattening for the production of ham and lard. At Vindolanda 78.9 per cent of the meat cattle were killed up to two and half years, which is the age for prime beef. A preponderance of killing of old cattle, on the other hand, means that their main use had been for traction and other work. But a high percentage killed as juveniles can also imply the elimination of rams or steers not needed for breeding. A majority of sheep killed at an advanced age points to wool production, but slaughter at two years or thereabouts was frequent (Gaul, Britain, Germany, Holland, Belgium; cf. Tell Hesbân), and is recommended by Columella (VIII, 4) since at that age the young animal has been able to breed and to produce at least one satisfactory fleece.

The horse too seems to have gained in size thanks to Roman influence. Two chief type-groups have been recognized in Europe, namely: the eastern, and generally larger, group located in Russia, Hungary, Slovenia and the Balkans (withers height 121 to 149.4 cm; 47.5 to 59 in) and a western group, rather smaller in size, located in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (the 'Celtic' group), its average being 109.9 to 149.4 cm (43 to 59 in). A larger horse, developed in Italy perhaps by interbreeding with the eastern group, is found, for instance, in the Rhineland, also in south Germany, Noricum and the Danube provinces, although the smaller types survived beside them, and generally both types appear to have been of heterogeneous origin. The very large military mounts found at Gellep on the lower Meuse appear not to have been imported but to have been the products of selective breeding in the area. Horses from a knacker's yard in Roman Paris were also found to be larger (150 cm; 59 in) than the 'Celtic'

type. Dutch archaeologists distinguish between large mounts introduced by the Roman army and smaller native horses. The mean withers height of horses on Roman military sites varies from 127 to 149 cm (50 to 59 in), that in villas from 125 to 145 cm (49 to 57 in); at other civilian sites from 127 to 150 cm (50 to 59 in).

The fact that the average size of all three species, cattle, sheep and horses, increased in many centres under Roman rule, but declined in western and central Europe with the destruction of the western Empire, is sufficient testimony to the effectiveness of Roman influence upon animal husbandry, so long as the Empire existed. Clearly this influence varied from region to region and from class to class of the population, but the results of a spread of Roman skills such as improved tools and water supply, protective buildings, the diversification of leguminous crops, crop rotations, efficient communications, markets, accounting, and a dependable judiciary, should not be underestimated.

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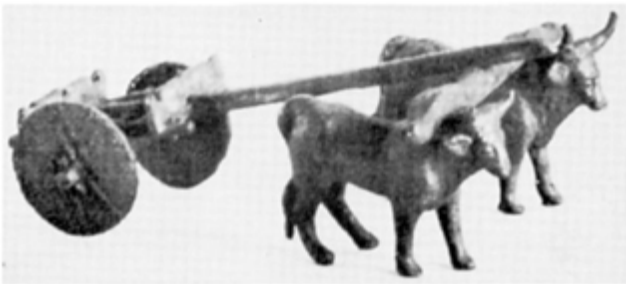
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19.1 Transport by ox-waggon in Asia; a sculptured frieze from Ephesus



(a)



(b)



(c)

19.2 A group of bronze figurines from Civita Castellana, Italy: (a) oxen and plough; (b) cows drawing a cart; (c) pigs, sheep and goats



19.3 Part of a large sarcophagus from Rome showing a road scene with an ox-cart, horse and rider, and a dog



19.4 Sheep illustrated on the column of Marcus Aurelius, Rome



19.5 A shepherd with his flock; the tombstone of the freedman Iucundus, from Mainz



19.6 Packs-horses carrying loads over a hill; the Igel Monument, Trier



19.7 A relief from Langres showing the transport of wine in bulk on a waggon drawn by a pair of mules. The disadvantage of neck-harness is apparent



19.8 Bronze statuette from Syria of a donkey with panniers



19.9 Terracotta statuette from Aphrodisias, Asia, of a camel carrying *amphorae*; the

driver sits to the rear



19.10 Mosaic from a villa near Zliten, Tripolitania, showing grain being threshed by horses and oxen



19.11 Mosaic from a villa near Oudna in Tunisia showing livestock on an estate



19.12 The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, Rome

· THE · VILLA · IN · ITALY · AND · THE · PROVINCES ·

John Percival

Although it is usually a good idea to define terms, and although studies of the Roman villa are usually prefaced by an attempt to define the term *villa* itself, there is a sense in which such an exercise is bound to be rather academic. It is very doubtful whether the Romans themselves could have agreed on a wholly watertight definition, since the word is not a legal or technical one and is likely therefore to have varied somewhat in its use by different people at different times. In practice this causes little difficulty: if it is simply a concern with identifying sites and labelling them it is only with a small minority that uncertainty or disagreement arises, and these are not likely to have a serious effect on any more general statements that may be made. There is, nevertheless, a duty to say how the word is to be used, if only to ensure that any arguments or discussions so provoked are about real issues and not simply about terminology, and this can be done quite briefly.

Essentially a villa was a place in the country: a place to live in, that is, as opposed to a temple or sanctuary, and a ‘private’ place as opposed to one for the use of the general public. The term is not usually appropriate for a house in a town, for which the more normal word would be *aedes*, though it could be used for a ‘suburban’ house, one, that is, which was strictly outside a town but was otherwise part of it in all important respects. In the great majority of cases a villa was a farm, and even with the larger ones where, it may be suspected, there were other, more important sources of wealth, it was unusual not to have some level of farming activity. Many show signs of what may rather grandly be called industrial operations, such

as iron working or the manufacture of tiles, but this was usually on a fairly small scale and probably formed part of their main agricultural role, though in most provinces there are a few examples where the activity was extensive enough to see them as primarily industrial centres. There are also villas in close proximity to such things as the large-scale manufacture of pottery, and it would seem a little arbitrary to exclude them from consideration by insisting too closely on a definition in terms of agriculture.

In size a villa can be anything from a small family farmstead like Frilford in Berkshire, a house with a dozen or so rooms measuring some 22 m by 12 m (73 ft by 40 ft) overall, to a palatial establishment like Chiragan in south-west France, which, in its residential part alone, covers more than 2.4 ha (6 acres). There is some degree of uncertainty at the lower end of the scale, in that the use of the Roman word would seem to require some evidence of Roman influence in amenities or design; this clearly excludes huts and other primitive structures, but how sophisticated a building needs to be before earning the label 'villa' is to some extent a matter of personal opinion. Thus, to take the well-known example of Mayen ([fig. 20.1](#)) which lies between Coblenz and Andernach on the Rhine, most would agree that by the time of its fourth phase it was a villa as generally understood; some would be more generous, and extend the term back to the third phase, while others would be reluctant to use it until the fifth, but the uncertainty is within fairly narrow limits. It should be said also that Roman influence does not necessarily imply luxury: the word does not have this connotation in Latin as it does in more modern contexts, though many villas were of course luxurious and many were sited in particularly attractive places, such as the bay of Naples or the Mediterranean coast of France.

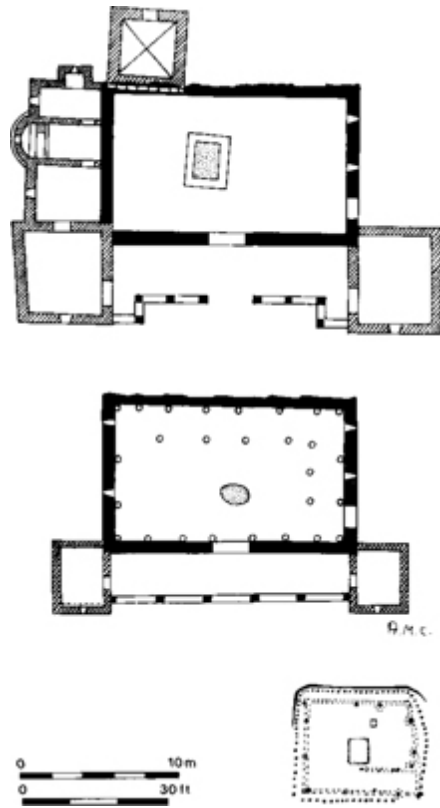


Figure 20.1 Mayen (after Oelmann)

The villa was common throughout much of the Empire, though most excavated sites are in the western provinces, in particular the Gallic and German provinces and Britain. Some years ago the material from Pannonia was conveniently assembled in a single volume, and more recently similar collections have been made of the villas of Spain; elsewhere it is probably not so much that villas are lacking, as that the appropriate work of exploring and collating has not been done. Even so, the number of sites is enormous: in 1956 the Ordnance Survey *Map of Roman Britain* listed 604 entries under 'Villas', 'Probable Villas' and 'Other Substantial Buildings', and the figure must by now be well in excess of 700. In Gaul there are very many more, and recent work in aerial reconnaissance has shown that the sites discovered by survey on the ground are likely to be no more than a fraction of the total. The most striking results in this connection are those of Roger Agache in the Somme basin, where something like 1,000 villas appear on air photographs in an area where only a few dozen were known

before.

In broad terms, the effect of these surveys is to reveal a greater density of sites rather than to alter the notion of the overall distribution. A glance at the map of Roman Britain shows that the villa is essentially a phenomenon of the lowland zone, and this is what is to be expected in view of its primarily agricultural function, though the more romanized economy and the more stable and peaceful conditions of the lowlands might be equally important factors. There are correlations, as might be expected, between the distribution of villas and patterns in the natural environment such as soil types and river systems, and between villas and man-made features such as roads and urban centres. There is an obvious preference for the lighter and more easily worked soils, though this was by no means universal. The technique of sinking wells, with which the Romans were long acquainted, made the villa less dependent on streams and rivers for its water supply, but rivers were still important for transport. The most plentiful evidence for this is from Gaul, which was particularly well served by a natural river network, but in view of the high cost of transport by road it is likely to have played an important part in other provinces as well ([Part 8, Chapter 23](#)). This is not of course in any way to deny the importance of roads as the primary network of communication throughout the Empire, and for the villas in particular their most obvious role is that of providing the rapid and easy access to markets on which they depended. The focal points of this network, the towns, were also the main markets, though it may well be that there were other, more rural ones at certain times of the year like the fairs of the middle ages. The towns would also provide that overall experience of a romanized way of life with which the villas and their owners would increasingly be associated.

Against these very broad patterns, which might be expected to be fairly constant throughout the villa provinces, it is nevertheless possible within a given area to discern local patterns and preferences. Sometimes these are merely stylistic, indicating little more than the influence of local builders and craftsmen, but when they affect the size of villas and their overall design it is justifiable to look for more fundamental explanations, such as local patterns of land tenure or the influence of traditional methods of farming. In some cases a historical interpretation might suggest itself, such as the settling of veteran soldiers on plots of land on retirement, or the encouragement of large-scale development of new areas by wealthy investors. It is to these and similar explanations that we turn, for example, when we are confronted by the large second-century villas in south-western Gaul, or the fairly large fourth-century ones in Somerset and

Gloucestershire, or again the small corridor villas that seem to predominate in much of northern France or the upper Rhine valley.

The variety of the local patterns, and the wide range of buildings to which they give rise, make generalization difficult, but it is possible nevertheless to identify a few

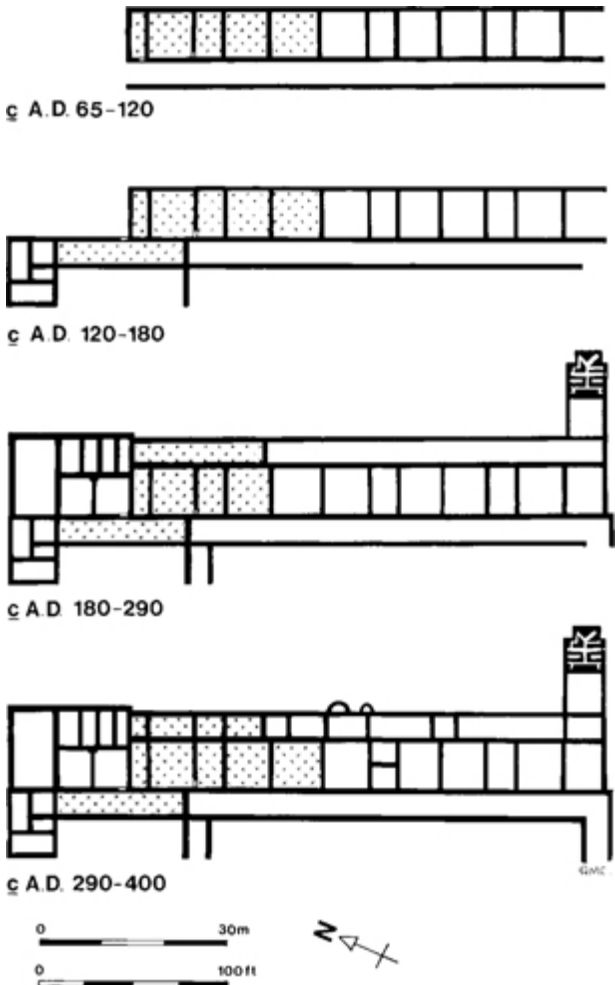


Figure 20.2 Eccles (after Detsicas)

of the more common types of villa which recur from one province to another. At its lowest level, the villa is obviously very simple; it may consist of a single large room, as in the early phases of Mayen (fig. 20.1) already referred to, or perhaps a pair of rooms, with the segregation of human and animal occupants. Sometimes, particularly in Britain, it could

consist of a row of small rooms : the most striking example of this is the early villa at Eccles in Kent (fig. 20.2), but it is found also in the first phases of Brixworth (fig. 20.5) in Northamptonshire, Frocester Court (fig. 20.4) in Gloucestershire and at a number of other places. With increasing wealth and sophistication these simple buildings developed into more complex ones: segregation continued, not only between humans and animals, but between master and servants, living rooms and workrooms, day rooms and bedrooms; new facilities, such as baths and heating systems, were added and incorporated into the design, as were corridors, verandahs, sun-rooms and so on.

The corridor, indeed, is so universal, particularly in the northern provinces, that the so-called corridor villa is not only a recognized type in its own right but by far the most common type that is encountered. Strictly speaking, what is being referred to is a verandah or portico rather than a corridor proper, and in this sense the German name of *Portikusvilla* is more accurate, or its French equivalent of *villa à galerie-façade*. Among numerous examples of it in Britain can be cited that of the ‘cottage house’ at Huntsham (fig. 20.5) in Herefordshire, where it is a simple addition to the front of a suite of rooms, or Great Staughton (fig. 20.3) in Huntingdonshire, where it is flanked, as in the vast majority of examples, by two symmetrically placed wing rooms to form a pleasing, and indeed imposing façade. The appeal, it may be suspected, was aesthetic as well as utilitarian, and there are many examples of villas to which it gives a deceptively grandiose appearance, presumably by deliberate design: at Hosté (fig. 20.5) in the Brabant province of Belgium, an already impressive villa is made much more so by its elongated corridor plan, and at Leutersdorf, in northern Germany, the corridor and its wing rooms have been developed into a feature apparently quite separate from the villa itself.

Such aberrations apart, there were some very impressive villas of the corridor type, particularly on the continent, and it is easy to see why it had such an appeal, even if its rather rigid overall design might at first sight seem to offer little scope for innovation and experiment. One development that became popular was to add a second corridor at the rear of the house, and sometimes another pair of corner rooms, giving the appearance almost of a military establishment rather than a peaceful agricultural one: a good example of this is Hambledon (fig. 20.3) in Buckinghamshire, and as an extreme version of it, the main residential block at Odrang in the Rhineland could also be cited. More commonly, the corner rooms at each end of the façade become extended into suites of rooms, as at Witcombe in Gloucestershire or Noyers-sur-Serein (fig. 20.3) in the northern lowlands of

France. The logical conclusion of this was to extend the wings a little further, join them together by another range of rooms, and so produce a courtyard

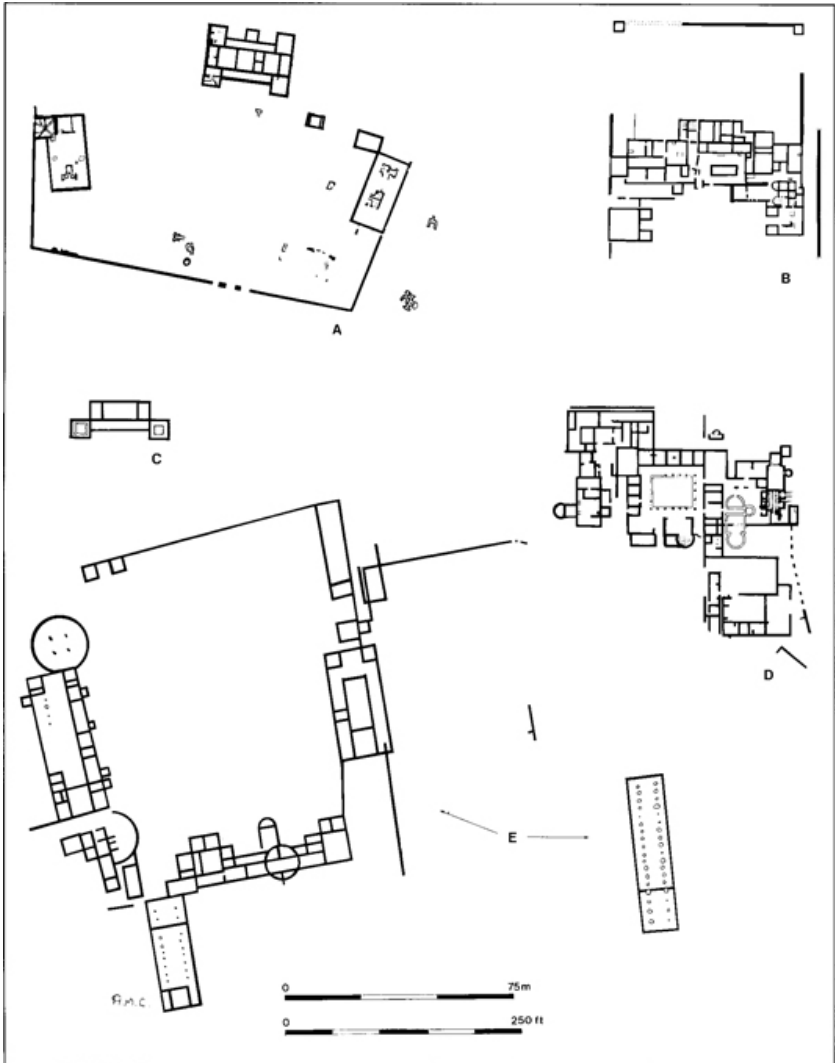


Figure 20.3 (A) Hambleton (*after Heneage Cocks*) ; (B) Noyers-sur-Serain (*after l'Abbé Duchatet*) ; (C) Great Staughton (*after Greenfield*) ; (D) La Cocosa, Badajoz (*after Serra Ràfols*) ; (E) Winterton (*after Goodburn*)

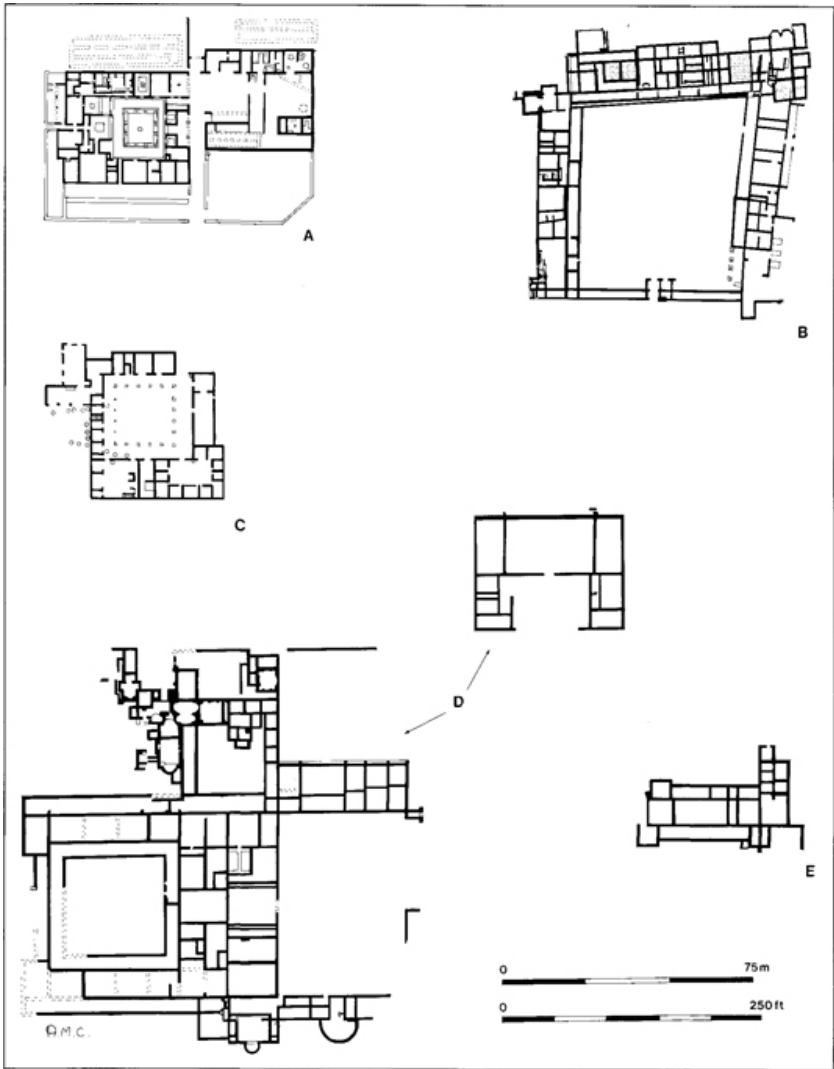


Figure 20.4 (A) Francolise (after Sheila Gibson); (B) North Leigh (after Haverfield); (C) Gragnano (after Sheila Gibson); (D) St Ulrich (after Lutz); (E) Frocester (after Price)

villa with rooms on four sides of an enclosed square. North Leigh (fig. 20.4) in Oxford-shire is perhaps the best example of this in Britain, and among continental examples could be mentioned Grivesnes (pl. 20.2) or Vieux-Rouen-sur-Bresle (pl. 20.1; fig. 20.6) in the Somme valley. It would, in any case, have been an obviously convenient arrangement to group the various buildings around a yard of some kind, and there are many

‘courtyard’ villas which clearly evolved in this way rather than as a development of the winged corridor type: Winterton (fig. 20.3) in Lincolnshire, Köln-Müngersdorf in the Rhineland, or even the rather ‘native’ looking site at Whitton (fig. 20.7) in South Glamorgan. Once this kind of grouping had been arrived at the idea could be further extended and a further courtyard added, with the advantage that a very clear separation could now be achieved between the residential part of the establishment and the parts associated with its role as a working farm. Woodchester in Gloucestershire is a striking example of this arrangement, and among the Somme valley sites already mentioned it is so common as to be almost the standard type.

How far these various types are connected in the evolutionary way which has been described is perhaps a matter for further study, but the basic scheme suggested (which is essentially that set out by Collingwood in the 1930s) is probably right, at least on a conceptual level. This is not to say that every villa necessarily evolved in the same way, nor should it be assumed that the more complex types are always later in time than the simple ones. There should be caution too about seeking to establish a single pattern of development throughout the Empire, with the various types evolving from a small number of prototypes (presumably in Italy itself) and spreading gradually to all the provinces. Such a hypothesis does not account for the very wide regional variations, which are much more likely to have been the result of independent development; and there is no obvious reason at the moment why Italy should be thought of as the ultimate source of inspiration. In recent years, Italian villas have become much better known and it has to be said that, on present evidence, there is no convincing *schema* in which both they and the provincial types can be incorporated.

It would seem, from the fairly limited number of sites known, that the most common simple types of villa in Italy were: first, a small enclosure with one or more buildings, and sometimes a taller tower-like structure, grouped inside it; and second, a square or rectangular building, comprising a dozen or so rooms arranged around a central unroofed space, which might be no more than an internal passage-way but might occasionally merit the name of peristyle. Excavated examples of the first type are not numerous, but Monte Forco in the Ager Capenas is one, and for the second type one could point to Sambuco in southern Etruria or the rather larger site not far away at Selvasecca (fig. 20.5). For both of these, it has been argued, there are Greek prototypes, and houses on the site of Olynthus on the Chalcidic peninsula have been cited as illustrations. In Italy, as in northern Europe,

the same factors operated as far as the development of plans is concerned: increasing wealth, acquisition of new facilities and amenities,

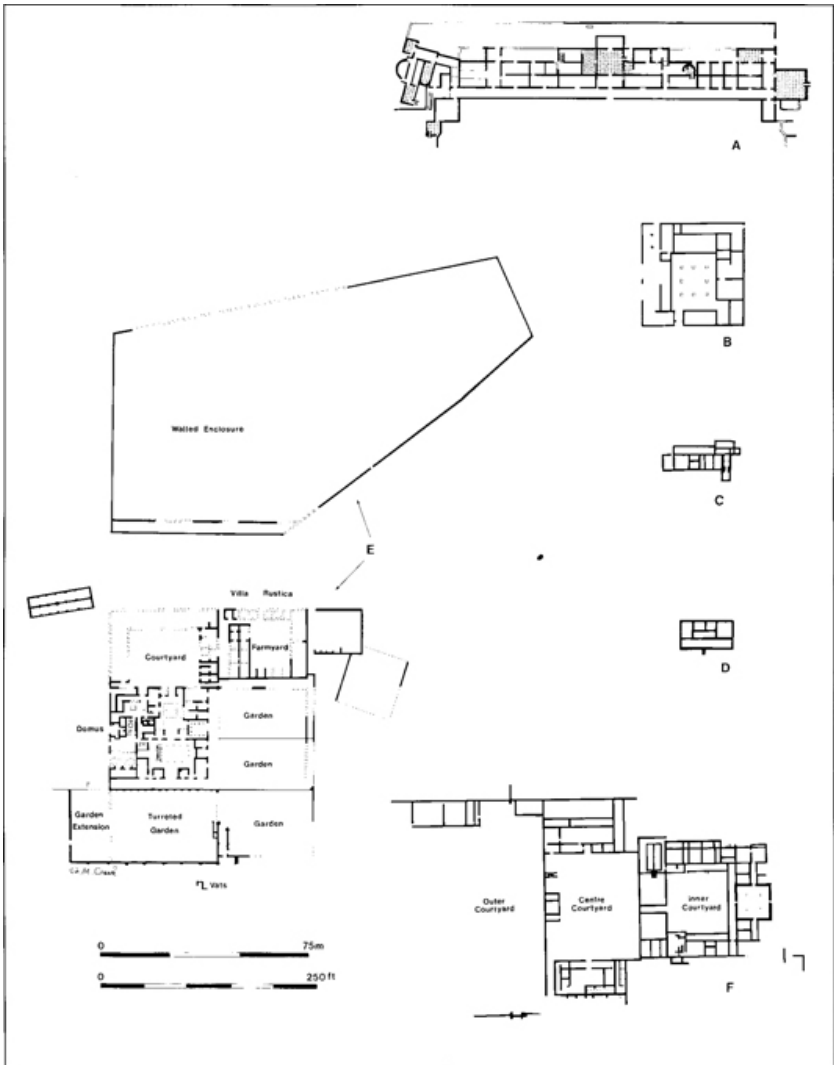


Figure 20.5 (A) Hosté (after Cumont); (B) Selvasecca (after Sheila Gibson); (C) Brixworth (after Tur land); (D) Huntsham (after Bridgewater); (E) Sette Finestre (after Sheila Gibson); (F) Woodchester

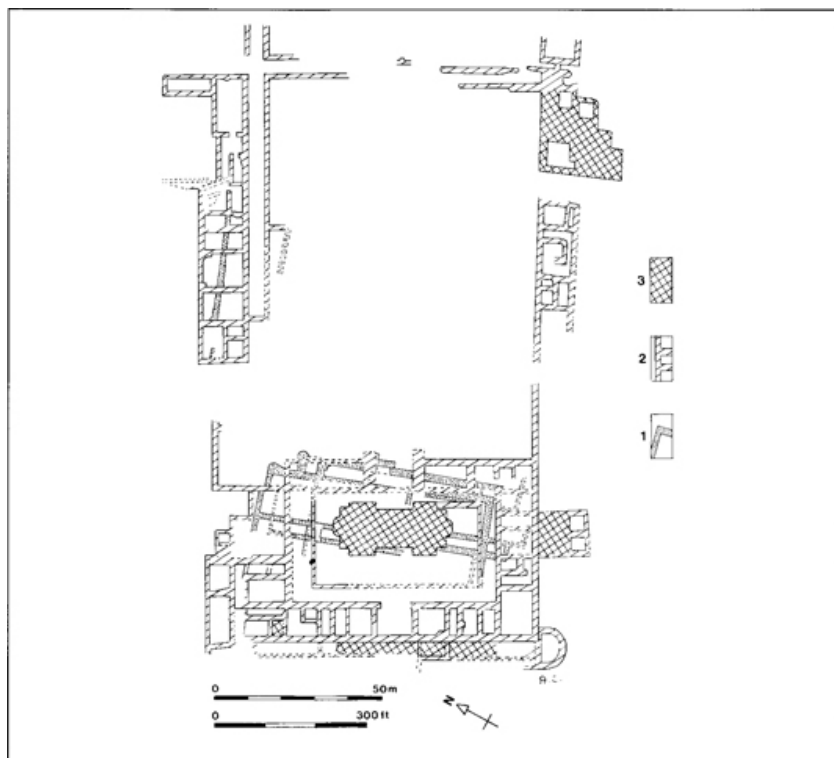


Figure 20.6 Vieux-Rouen-sur-Bresle (after Agache)

the segregation of people and operations. But what they lead to, essentially, is an increasingly large and complex peristyle house, such as one finds at Gragnano (fig. 20.4) in Campania or, in its more developed form, at San Rocco near Ravenna or Sette Finestre (fig. 20.5) in Etruria. These, like their more simple prototypes, are quite different from the standard types in the provinces, for which, with one exception, they would seem to provide no model.

The one exception is the peristyle villa, which is itself one of the standard provincial types: there are examples of it in most provinces and quite numerous examples in some of them. As one might expect, it is relatively common in Spain, as at La Cocosa (fig. 20.3) near Badajoz or the so-called Villa of Fortunatus at Fraga in the Huesca province;

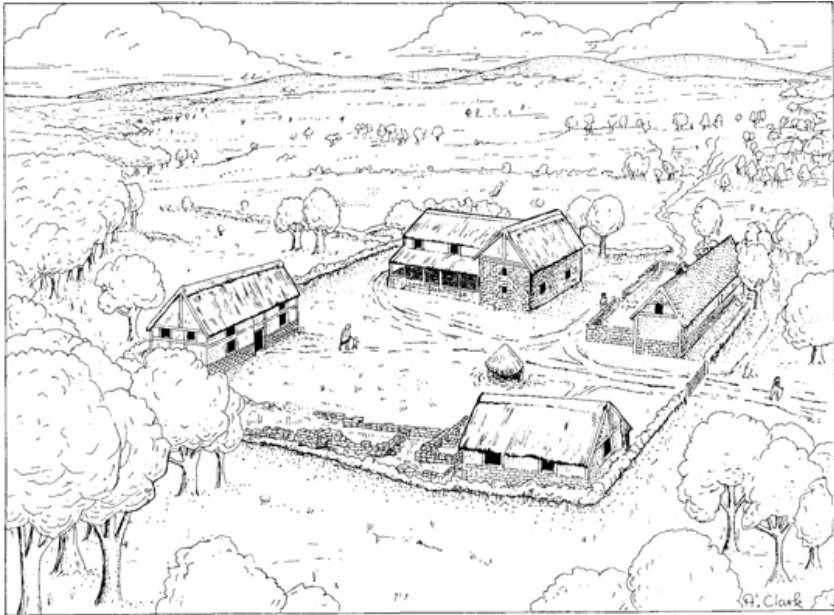


Figure 20.7 Restoration drawing of the villa at Whitton (*after Jarrett*)

and in Mediterranean France, as at Montmaurin and Lalouquette in the foothills of the Pyrenees. But there are examples further north as well: Pannonia has a number of them, and at St-Ulrich ([fig. 20.4](#)), in the Moselle *department* of France, there is perhaps the most remarkable of them all. Not all of these sites are early by any means, so that it is not simply a matter of a Mediterranean type being imported wholesale in the early stages and then being superseded by local types in the course of time. But they seem to be special, in the sense that whereas the other types can be shown to be conceptually linked to one another to some extent, these are separate and outside the framework; to this extent they are an importation rather than an integral part of the local culture.

The question of villas and romanization is considered more fully below, but it is fair in general terms to say that the appearance and development of villas in a given region is an indication of the spread of Roman institutions and life-styles and, more important, of the relatively stable economy and peaceful social conditions that these imply. In an area such as Provence, where these conditions had been effectively achieved by the end of the first century BC, the villa emerged in a recognizable form in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian period, and by the end of the first century AD it had spread through the rest of Gaul. The pattern is similar in the other Mediterranean provinces : in Africa, for example, where there was a tradition of large-

scale intensive farming going back to the Carthaginian period, there were villas at least as early as in Provence and possibly earlier; and in Spain too, though evidence from excavated sites is still scarce, it is likely that many of the villas date back to the same period. Elsewhere, as one would expect, the development is rather later: the first villas in Dalmatia and Pannonia come sometime in the first century AD, and in Britain, with the exception of a few early sites in the south-east, it is the early second century before the process gets fully under way. The head start that the more southerly villas had over those further north was to have important consequences later, since the upheaval and recession of the third century caught the development of villas at different stages in the different regions. Thus in France and Spain there was ample time for the villa to reach a peak of refinement and prosperity before the troubles came, so that the Antonine and Severan periods provide us with our most splendid examples; whereas in Britain and other less favoured areas the villas encountered the crisis at a rather earlier stage in their development, and it was only in the fourth-century recovery, if at all, that they began to rival the continental ones.

Villas and the economy

A villa had its own internal economy, but it also formed part of the economy of the region in which it was situated, and a study of its remains can throw light on much broader questions than may at first appear. At the most obvious level, in their size and in the amenities they contain, the villas are indicators of wealth, both of the individual owner and of a given region at a given period of time. Of the source of that wealth they can tell us little for certain, though they can often provide hints in the form of buildings and facilities such as olive presses, grain stores, housing for cattle, or simply from their situation, in good arable land, near rich pasture and so on. There is no certainty, of course, that the wealth was derived from farming: the house and its appointments may represent the investment of capital derived from quite different sources, and in the more lavish examples this is most likely to have been the case. Lower down the scale, however, represented perhaps by a fairly modest establishment with a small bath block and a couple of mosaic pavements, it would be reasonable to assume that the refinements are the result of an agricultural surplus. This in turn implies the existence of flourishing markets and of a fairly numerous non-agricultural population requiring food. The amenities themselves imply the availability

of craftsmen and of labour generally, and of a pattern of exchange rather wider than that of the immediate neighbourhood. They also indicate a degree of confidence: there are no precise figures for the cost of a mosaic or a hypocaust system, but it can hardly have been negligible, and one cannot imagine a villa owner investing in such things unless he felt reasonably secure in his tenure and in his continuing profits. Collectively, when a consistent pattern emerges from a whole range of sites, such indications are of considerable importance: it is this kind of evidence, for example, that reveals the uneven nature of the fourth-century economic recovery in Gaul, which in some areas produced quite large and lavishly appointed villas and in others more workmanlike establishments in which the luxuries of an earlier age had been in large measure abandoned.

Against this more general background the evidence for the internal economy of a villa is naturally more detailed and more precise, though it has to be said that the precision is sometimes more apparent than real. It is possible, with a fair degree of confidence, to identify rooms and buildings as being designed for particular purposes: that is, barns, byres and stables can be discovered, and the amount of grain that could be stored in them or the number of cattle or ploughing teams that they could be thought to house can, with appropriate margins of error, be calculated. Careful survey can also go some way towards reconstructing the associated field systems, and can even, by pollen analysis or from the scatter of potsherds in farmyard manure, make informed guesses about the kind of farming and the kinds of crops that were favoured. Bignor in Sussex and, more controversially, Gatcombe in Somerset can be cited as examples of villas where this kind of study has been carried out, and as useful guides to the reliability or otherwise of the techniques involved. The problem with these and similar studies is to assemble a body of evidence which is sufficiently complete and which provides an opportunity for cross-checking: clearly, if only small fragments of the field system are recovered, only very general statements about the overall management of the estate can be made; equally, if calculations are made on the basis of the fields, the figures are likely to be extremely tentative unless they can be supported by independent calculations on the basis of, for example, barns and granaries. To some extent this is a matter of archaeological technique: there are few sites at the moment which provide enough of the evidence needed, but as skills improve there is every reason to suppose that they will become more numerous and more productive. Nevertheless, there will always be questions to which archaeology alone can give no answer: for example, the cost of agricultural land at particular times in particular areas, or the cost of

amenities and implements. There are questions also which, though answerable in principle, are likely to remain very difficult without the kind of statistical information which is available for later historical periods.

The great lack, of course, is documents against which the evidence of archaeology can be set, and without which it is often ambiguous and imprecise. Indeed, one of the central problems in studying the economy of the ancient world is that whereas the country, and more specifically agriculture, were at all times fundamental to it, the greater part of the evidence, in terms of documentary and epigraphic material, concerns the towns and their industry and commerce. It is all too easy to forget that the very existence of towns depended on a regular supply of food and therefore on the estates which produced it, just as the villas on those estates depended on the towns in the ways already referred to. The town and the villa were in a very obvious sense inter-dependent: the one implied the other.

This is not to say that the relationship was always the same: indeed, the subtle changes in the relationship at different periods and in different regions, though imperfectly understood in the present state of knowledge, are one of the more interesting sidelights on the evolving economy of the Empire as a whole. In broad terms, as has been said, they would be expected to rise and fall together, with flourishing markets and buoyant agricultural production, or the reverse in each case, being part of an overall pattern. At times, however, they are interestingly out of phase, as in the late first century in Britain, where it has been suggested that villas developed more rapidly than their associated urban centres, perhaps reflecting the preferences of a traditionally non-urban native aristocracy. Such situations, though, are not likely to be more than temporary, and the close interdependence of town and country should make us wary of, for example, theories of a 'flight to the country' at times of economic hardship. It can be well understood that in periods of acute economic uncertainty there might be a move towards self-sufficiency, with owners retreating to their estates and attempting to encapsulate themselves in a largely self-contained world. There is, indeed, some evidence that this happened in parts of the continent as a result of the difficulties of the third century. But if it were whole-hearted and permanent its effect would be to produce quite different establishments from the villas as they are commonly pictured; instead of the marbles and mosaics and the heating systems and all the other items which imply the interrelationship of villa and town, there would be the unspectacular evidence of the subsistence or near subsistence farming which would be all that their self-contained world could manage. Whether

the term villa would still be appropriate to such an establishment is, to say the least, questionable.

Villas and society

On the social, as on the economic, level the value of the villas is partly that they illustrate and exemplify what is known already from other sources, and partly also that they modify what was thought to be known or even reveal things that were not known at all. It would be fair to say, in general, that the interpretation of villa remains from a social point of view is made more difficult by the fact that it is people rather than objects that are being dealt with, and in particular relationships between people. Such relationships may or may not be reflected in the physical layout of a villa, and the same is true of the social status of individuals or groups. If they are not, there is little that can be done unless there is evidence from other sources; if they are, they are likely to be implicit rather than explicit, and judgments about them will be correspondingly subjective.

On some matters, perhaps, there is a greater degree of assurance. If a villa is well appointed, with comfortable residential areas, good quality pavements and heating systems, it is not an unreasonable assumption that the owner either lived in it or used it fairly frequently. By the same token a villa which in other respects is large and prosperous, but is not particularly lavish in its living quarters, may be thought to be under the supervision of a farm manager on behalf of an absentee owner. A sudden decline in comfort at a particular point in the history of a villa may indicate an equally sudden change of fortune, but could also mean the departure of an owner to another home or perhaps a sale to an owner who already lived elsewhere. Even at this very simple level it is possibilities rather than certainties that are being considered; but from a number of sites collectively quite clear and reliable evidence can be obtained for the pattern of ownership at given times in given areas: the small family farms, the farms that formed part of larger estates with owners in temporary residence from time to time or not at all, the great country houses regarded by their owners as home.

There are, too, the little indications of status, often at the more humble end of the social scale: the segregation of human accommodation from that of animals, or of the owner and his family from his workmen; the provision of little verandahs and porticos; the way in which, when a villa is rebuilt and extended, it is turned back to front so that it looks away from the

farmyard rather than into it. What there is, in these and similar features, is evidence for the occupants' notion of themselves and of their status in society at large. What cannot, of course, be obtained from villas is evidence for their owners' *actual* status in legal or social terms, whether they were local men or immigrants, 'Romans' or 'natives', ex-slaves, ex-soldiers or whatever. It is known from inscriptions and literary evidence that villas were regularly owned by all of them, but it is very rare to attach a particular name to a particular site, and even rarer to say with confidence that a particular villa must have belonged to this or that category of person.

There are similar uncertainties about a villa's workforce. What proportion of it was slaves and what free men? Is there evidence of a shift of emphasis from one to the other in the later Empire? How far did the status of the free worker decline towards that of a serf? On such questions the villas themselves offer little help. There are rows of small 'cells' in some Italian villas, which may or may not have been designed as slave quarters, and there are occasional items elsewhere suggesting the use of slave gangs, such as the chains discovered at the Park Street villa in Hertfordshire. But these are both rare and inconclusive, and interpretation of them probably owes too much in any case to a rather stereotyped view of the slave as a kind of superior farm animal: if he was he may not have been housed in the villa itself at all, and if he was not it is likely that he will have been largely indistinguishable from a free worker. It is known, for example, that slaves were commonly set up in dependent holdings in the same way as free *coloni*, and this alone should warn against being too hopeful of determining status by reference to buildings.

Status apart, it should at least be possible to decide whether a given villa's lands were worked directly by a labour force under centralized control or indirectly in a series of dependent farms. Even if the dependent farms themselves cannot be identified, there are possible clues at the centre: the presence or absence of living accommodation for large numbers of workers, the presence of unusually large barns suggesting storage of produce brought in by tenants, or a comparative lack of plough-teams suggesting the cultivation of the arable by contributory services. Occasionally there are other suggestive features: the apparent over-provision of bath facilities at East Grimstead in Wiltshire and Stroud in Hampshire, for example, has been thought to indicate the presence of a considerable working population in the area, though in this case perhaps the question of whether they were *coloni* or not remains unanswered.

Villas and romanization

The mention of *coloni* gives rise to a more fundamental question, and one which by no means lends itself to a simple answer: that of the extent to which the villa can be seen as an indicator of a romanized way of life in provinces which, before the coming of the Romans, had a distinctive culture of their own. At first sight, perhaps, this may seem to be an unduly cautious question: the radical difference between a villa, even a comparatively modest one, and an Iron Age hut might seem to be so obvious as not to need further discussion, while the adoption of such characteristically Roman amenities as bath suites, hypocausts, mosaic pavements and painted wall plaster, would seem to speak for itself. But it would be wrong to assume without further discussion that traditional patterns of life were wholly and rapidly abandoned in favour of Roman ones. The literary texts refer almost exclusively to the upper levels of society, who will have had most to gain from such instant conversion; there is evidence, particularly from Gaul, that not all of them showed the same enthusiasm, and one wonders in any case how far down the social scale it went. There is also an obvious danger of placing too much emphasis on material things: it is known from more recent colonial experience that a wholesale adoption of the trappings of European culture need not involve the abandonment of deep-seated traditional values and modes of behaviour, and there is no compelling reason why the ownership of a villa should in itself imply any fundamental adoption of Roman ways.

It has already been shown above that the provincial villa was not, in any case, a slavish reproduction of the Italian one, and that in spite of obvious Italian influence there were definite provincial styles of villa planning which presumably evolved to meet varying needs and conditions. In some cases there is very clear evidence of 'native' influence: the standard villa throughout much of Germany, for example, is the small corridor type with, as its central feature, a large communal room, presumably derived from the characteristic Iron Age dwelling and probably fulfilling the same basic functions. In Britain there are several features which at some time or other have been thought to indicate non-Roman social patterns, and there has in recent years been something of an upsurge in this kind of interpretation. The aisled buildings, which used to be known as 'basilican villas' and which are largely if not exclusively a British phenomenon, have seemed to many to belong to a pattern of kinship communities rather than to simple nuclear families, and it has recently been suggested that many villas which had hitherto been regarded as unexceptional were in fact occupied jointly

by groups of families, sometimes with shared facilities. More generally, the absence of patterned mosaic pavements in some areas of Britain has been taken as evidence for land-holding by kinship groups rather than by individuals, the suggestion being that only under 'private' ownership would there be either the necessary capital or the permanency of tenure appropriate to such long-term investment. Much of the argument in these cases is necessarily subjective, and there seems little prospect of achieving any unanimity among scholars on the matter. What does seem clear, however, is that there is a danger of assuming too 'Roman' a picture on the basis of material possessions alone; the possessions have to be seen in context, not least in the physical context of the houses in which they were enjoyed.

This is an important point to make, because the literary and documentary sources, to which it is necessary to turn for the interpretation of archaeological evidence, come largely from the Mediterranean centre of the Empire, and may therefore overstate the 'Roman-ness' of things, if only in the sense that they will take little or no account of regional exceptions and peculiarities. Only if these are so striking as to make the normal terms and concepts inapplicable will there be any need to refer to them or to make special provision to deal with them. A possible example of this is the *colonnate*, a dependent form of land tenure in which holdings were leased to small farmers in return for specified dues and services. The system is well documented in the legal codes, and though there is only one passage which explicitly and unmistakably connects it with Britain it is commonly supposed that it operated on at least the larger British villa estates in the late Empire, the assumption presumably being that if it did not, and a 'native' system was operating in its place, there would have been some hint of it in the sources. But this is by no means certain: the Roman administrative system was particularly good at absorbing and accommodating local practices, and there are numerous examples of Roman words being applied to institutions which were not Roman at all, such as Caesar's *equites* and *clientes* in Gaul, to mention one of the more obvious. Indeed, it may be wondered if anything short of a major disruption of the collection of taxes will have brought the details of the tenure patterns in Britain to higher official notice. So far as the documents are concerned, it cannot be inferred either that the *colonnate* was at all common in Britain or that where it did occur it was the same *colonnate* as that appearing in the lawbooks.

This may be an extreme case, and it should not deceive us into adopting too extreme a position. Britain, it could be argued, is something of an

exception among the provinces, and it would certainly be more difficult to argue for a high level of 'native' survival over much of the continent. Even in Britain it would be hard to deny that a villa like Chedworth, let alone one like Woodchester, represents a fundamental change in the economic, social and cultural life of the people involved; and it would be inconsistent in any case to play down the importance of a villa in Britain while allowing that a similar one in Gaul, for example, is part of the romanizing process. What *must* be done is to be rid of the nineteenth-century assumption that the villas were owned and inhabited by Romans, living an entirely Roman way of life; but equally, the temptation must be resisted to see the villa owners as crude barbarians, adopting Roman amenities as status symbols only. In this, as in so many fields of study, the villas must be interpreted, not in isolation, but as part of the cultural pattern as a whole.

The end of the villa

Whatever it may imply about the 'Roman-ness' or otherwise of its owner, the villa was nevertheless, to use Professor Rivet's words, 'integrated into the social and economic organization of the Roman world', and with the passing of that world, or more accurately with the disappearance of its social and economic organization, the villa itself disappeared. The old images, admittedly, no longer carry conviction: there was no sudden and full-scale withdrawal of 'Romans' from the western provinces, and there was nothing like the total destruction of Romanity by countless hordes of barbarian invaders that is popularly imagined. But even if the drama is removed and the process drawn out it still makes sense to see the end of the villa as the result of two kinds of forces combining with, and intensifying each other: the external force of invasion by peoples outside the Empire, and the internal one of economic decline and collapse. This is not the place to go into details regarding the forces themselves, but rather to assess their impact, and chart their effects, on the villas both individually and collectively.

In a sense assistance in this task is provided by the fact that these forces, which from the late-fourth century onwards brought destruction to the villa on a massive scale, were given as it were a trial run rather more than a century earlier, so that there is a foretaste in the third century of the likely course of events later on. That many villas were destroyed in the course of the third century is indisputable, even though the precise dating of

particular cases is often problematical. Many, no doubt, will have suffered accidental destruction, and it is also possible that what were seen as destruction layers in some of the early excavations may have been the result of industrial activity of some kind. Many more sites were abandoned at this time, either to be reoccupied after a gap or in many cases not at all, and there is plenty of evidence of declining standards of maintenance and a comparative lack of new building. How the blame is apportioned between the external and internal pressures will naturally be a matter for discussion, but there can be little doubt that both are involved and that each will have aggravated the other.

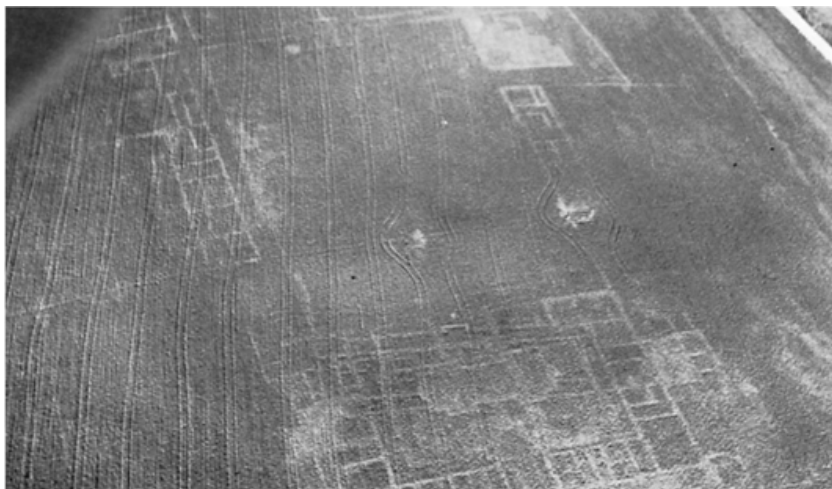
The survival which is evident from the late-third century onwards is by no means uniform throughout the provinces. In Britain, as has long been recognized, the fourth century saw the appearance of numerous large and luxurious villas, particularly in the west of the country, associated apparently with the incorporation of previously small estates into much larger units. A similar pattern can be discerned in the region of Trier, perhaps as a result of the town's emergence as an imperial capital, though here it is more a matter of the recovery of earlier prosperity than the unprecedented expansion achieved in Britain. Elsewhere on the continent the pattern appears to be one of unspectacular and hard-won recovery, with a concentration on the working functions of villas and a marked decline in the more luxurious aspects compared with the heyday of the late-second and early-third centuries.

This variety of response to the third-century troubles should make us wary of jumping to conclusions about the effects of the later ones. All along it has been known that the pattern of invasion was by no means uniform, either in the dates at which different regions were affected or in the intensity and scale of the invasions, or, indeed, in the character and aims of the invaders themselves. And now it is known also that the economic base was also variable from one region to another, adding a further element of uncertainty to the short-term and long-term consequences. That the vast majority of the villas went under in the course of the fifth century, or even earlier, it would be foolish to deny; the many hundreds of excavated sites which, with or without a destruction layer, yield no material beyond the period in question, are the unanswerable evidence with which to begin. But it is equally clear that the majority is not the totality, and there is increasing evidence now to suggest that a minority of sites survived the Empire, and that they are by no means negligible or insignificant.

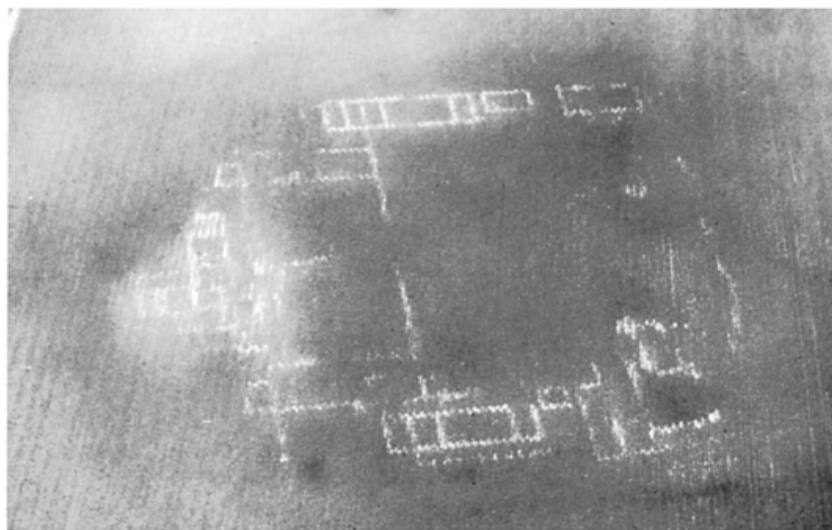
A few may have survived intact: in the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris in

the fifth century, and the poetry of Fortunatus in the sixth, there are descriptions of villas which, though they may in some cases have acquired a somewhat embattled appearance, are nevertheless recognizable as villas in the normal meaning of the term. Some of them are in the Visigothic area of Gaul, which is known from other evidence to have experienced a less traumatic transition from Roman to Germanic rule; but others, such as those in the Moselle valley, are outside it and should make the concept of uniform destruction questionable. More commonly, perhaps, the survival will have been more precarious and less complete: villas may have continued to survive as centres of settlement, losing in many cases their status as proprietary units, and evolving in due course as hamlets and later villages. The survival over much of the continent of Roman estate names in *-acum* is clearly to be interpreted in some such terms and is itself very strong evidence for survival on a considerable scale. Other villas, it seems, were converted, either immediately or after a period of abandonment and neglect, into religious sites, either because they had some religious association in the form of a shrine or something similar, or because they came to be used as the sites for cemeteries. These sites in turn might evolve into centres of settlement and so constitute a measure of continuity of a different kind.

The villa, in fact, like the Empire itself, showed a marked reluctance to die. Like the Empire, it might have looked very different in the sixth century from what it had done in the fourth; equally, both will have differed in the fourth from what they had been in the first or second, and although for the purposes of writing books and constructing syllabuses a final date has to be placed on each of them it is known nevertheless that history itself is rarely quite so tidy.



20.1 Aerial view of the villa at Vieux-Rouen-sur-Bresle, France



20.2 Aerial view of the villa at Grivesnes, France

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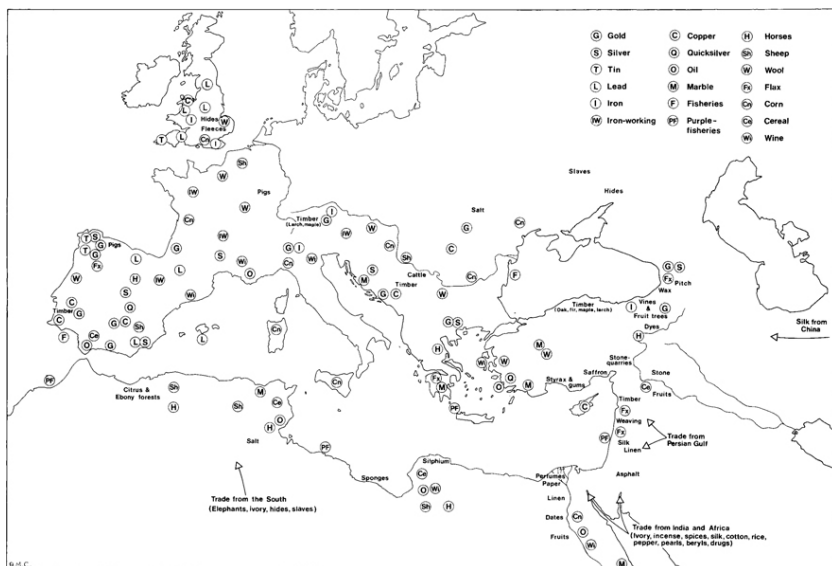


Figure 21.1 The resources of the Roman Empire

PART 8

• THE • ECONOMY •

· IMPERIAL · ESTATES ·

Dorothy J. Thompson

The primacy of land both as a measure of status and a form of investment was never doubted in the ancient world. The Roman dynasts of the late Republic were noted for their estates, and it was only natural that the emperors who followed should become the largest landowners amongst their contemporaries (Shatzman, 1975, 357–71 for Augustus). And whilst estates were only one of the sources of imperial wealth, joined for instance by quarries, mines, brickworks, salt-pans, flocks and herds (MacMullen, 1962, 277–82), they were certainly the most significant. The changing extent, nature and exploitation of these estates, which form the subject of this chapter, may therefore serve to illustrate important facets, both political and economic, of imperial power. The development, for example, from the rule of the Julio-Claudians, characterized by a tentative and personal exercise of imperial power, to the more codified and securely administered rule of the Flavians is nowhere more clearly seen than in the changing attitudes of the emperors towards their estates. What started as personal inheritance became imperial patrimony tied to office, and the reorganization of the imperial estates by the new dynasty typified this change in rule.

Imperial estates: their identification and extent

The pattern of distribution of imperial estates changed almost as often as did the emperor. The additions to the roster of imperial land and the withdrawals from it are only partially recorded in the literary, documentary

and epigraphical sources that survive, and so to draw up a map of imperial land-holding at any one date is impossible. However such records as do survive give some indication of the location and changing scale of imperial estates.

‘Boundary of (the estate) of our (lord) Caesar’ declares, somewhat surprisingly in Latin, an undated stone from Kılıç on Lake Burdur in Greek-speaking Pisidia (*CIL* III, 6872; Bean, 1959, 82–4). Possibly connected with Nero’s village of Tymbrianassos, known from Greek inscriptions to have been located at the south-west end of the lake, such explicit evidence for imperial land is rare. In Asia however it is primarily inscriptions which reveal the extent of imperial estates in the inland valleys of Phrygia, Galatia and Lydia (Strubbe, 1975; Crawford, 1976, 64–6). Sited well clear of the cities on the coast, these estates of the Roman emperor seem in part to have succeeded to the crown land of the hellenistic kingdoms (Broughton, 1934, 220–1).

Elsewhere there is other evidence. In Egypt papyri serve to supplement the more general statements of ancient historians, biographers and land-surveyors. Thus whilst Tacitus, eloquent in commenting on the greed of Nero, records how in AD 62 the emperor put Pallas to death in order to lay hands on the freedman’s great riches, he gives no further details. For Egypt however papyri (Crawford, 1976, 175, note 25) record Pallas’ holding in eight different villages of the Arsinoite nome with further plots in the Hermopolite and possibly Oxyrhynchite nomes; in Italy a further holding of Pallas is recorded at Sabinum by Phlegon of Tralles writing in the second century AD. Similarly with Seneca’s land which Nero inherited in AD 65 on the suicide of his earlier advisor. Mentioned as significant in an earlier letter of Seneca, it is only from the papyri that the details of Seneca’s land-holding in Egypt may be documented in any sort of detail. Still known in the third century AD by the name of their most prominent holder, these estates of Seneca which later, under the Flavians, were administered together with those of Nero’s freedman Doryphorus as part of the holding of the emperor Titus, were located in at least thirteen different Arsinoite villages with additional land in the Hermopolite, Herakleopolite and Oxyrhynchite nomes (Crawford, 1976, 176, note 37; cf. *CIL* VIII, 23116 with Broughton, 1929, 201 for a *vicus Annaeus* at Semta in Africa). Other Egyptian estates, the earlier holdings of imperial counsellors and favourites together with members of the imperial family - Livia, for instance, Maecenas, Germanicus, Narcissus, Decius Valerius Asiaticus, Messalina or Acte - found their way back into the imperial holdings, consolidated as the estates of Vespasian or Titus. The papyri provide an

unparalleled source of evidence both for their identification and exploitation. They show for instance that in Egypt, as elsewhere, imperial land, often in quite small lots, was interspersed with other types of holding (Kehoe, 1982, 137–8, note 48, Africa; Strubbe, 1975, 229 map, Phrygia).

In Africa, as in Asia, it is the epigraphical record which supplements the literary sources. For ‘in Africa’, as Frontinus records in a discussion of estates (*saltus*), ‘the emperor owns not a little’. And Pliny’s claim that, before Nero put them to death and presumably confiscated their land, six land-owners held half of the province may in part be substantiated by the epigraphical record of a *fundus* or *saltus Neronianus* (a farm or estate of Nero) in the Bagradas valley inland of Carthage which subsumed the earlier *saltus Blandianus*, *saltus Udensis* and areas of the *saltus Lamianus* and *Domitianus*, estates probably named after their original owners. These estates, together with other imperial holdings in the area, are recorded in a group of long inscriptions from the area which preserve rulings relevant to the land and those who exploit it (Kotula, 1952–3, 136 with map; Kolendo, 1976; Flach, 1978; Kehoe, 1982; Johne, Köhn and Weber, 1983, 309–43, 391–404). Further west, in Numidia, Theveste was a centre of imperial administration. Imperial boundary stones survive from the same area and tenants, together with imperial officials, are recorded from the countryside around Lambaesis and Thamugadi (Fentress, 1979, 134–42 with map). In Mauretania, especially in a large area southwest of Sitifis, similar boundary stones and dedications from the second and third centuries AD mark the areas of imperial ownership. Here fortified centres, *castella* or *defenciones* (like that of Matidia, the mother-in-law of the emperor Hadrian, later inherited by the Severans) formed the typical centres of exploitation. As with the *kasour* of Morocco today, these strong fortifications with their towers and battlements provided security for the imperial tenants. With their native names latinized, these tenants - *coloni Lemellefenses*, *castellani Perdicenses* or *coloni Kalefacalenses Pardalarienses* - repaired their walls, setting up altars and dedications to the divinity of the ruling emperor (Février, 1966). The scatter of dedications and records of imperial officials may be supplemented by the evidence of archaeology to show local settlement patterns and, with the survival of presses, the areas of olive cultivation (Lassère, 1977, 314–34 with map).

In the north-western provinces of Spain, Gaul, Germany and Britain, the epigraphical record is slighter. Inscribed *amphorae* from Spain, from Baetica and Tarraconensis, may in the third century have brought oil from imperial estates for consumption in Rome and elsewhere (Crawford, 1976, 70; Manacorda, 1977). In Spain, as in Gaul, Africa and Italy, confiscations

by Septimius Severus added to the imperial holdings in the province which were already significant under Nero. Imperial procurators and other officials are recorded here, but not the boundaries of the land.

In Britain the large-scale agricultural development of some areas, especially around the Wash and in the Fenlands of East Anglia, has been ascribed to imperial initiative and ownership (Phillips, 1970, 7 and 10). Whilst plausible, such an identification which is based on archaeological evidence alone, must remain hypothetical without epigraphical or documentary support. Some imperial *saltus* or estates are known from Germany, for example the *saltus Sumelocennensis* around Rothenburg, and in Noricum, Pannonia, Raetia and Moesia the record of imperial officials is the most sure form of evidence for the existence of imperial landholding. So too from Greece imperial procurators and other lesser officials serve to indicate imperial landed interests in the province (Crawford, 1976, 66–7 and 70).

For Italy the same sorts of evidence surviving in the literary mentions of imperial estates and the epigraphical record of their staff are joined, somewhat surprisingly, by references in medieval land registers. As in Egypt land earlier belonging to members of the Julio-Claudian family and to their dependants retained this connection in the names by which the estates were later known, so too in Italy estates once of Germanicus, in the Sabine territory and at Reate, are still so named (*fundus Germanicianus* and *curtis Germanicana*) in the medieval land register of Farfa (di Catino, 1914, xxx, sv; information from E. Gabba through M. H. Crawford). Other medieval cartularies may well contain such records; this source has not yet been exploited.

It is therefore from a whole range of different sources that a picture of imperial land-holding throughout the Empire begins to emerge. The picture, however, remains sketchy and incomplete.

Acquisition and alienation

When Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, Constantine (as recorded in the *Liber pontificalis*) endowed the newly established church with landed wealth, most of which came from the imperial estates. Although the growth and changing boundaries of these estates are only partially documented through the centuries, some significant periods of change and development may be noted. Whilst inheritance and confiscation

formed the most regular sources of acquisition, gifts and sale featured amongst the most common forms of alienation.

In origin the Julio-Claudian estates will have been the personal patrimony of Augustus; but his extensive conquests brought significant additions. In Galatia it seems likely that Augustus annexed the lands and herds of King Amyntas, whilst the Egyptian evidence suggests a more complex origin for imperial land within that province.

In Egypt, under the personal rule of the Julio-Claudians, imperial land was used extensively to endow loyal associates of the emperor as well as members of his family (Rostovtzeff, 1957, 292–5; Tomsin, 1957; Parassoglou, 1978). Such grants were limited to the lifetime of the recipient and their return to the crown and subsequent disposal results in complicated descriptions of the plots concerned. In AD 56–7, for instance, Papos son of Tryphon, from Herakleia in the Themistos division of the Arsinoite nome, made a lease application to Euschemon, the *oikonomos* or manager of the Arsinoite estate of Tiberius Claudius Doryphorus which had earlier belonged to Narcissus. The neighbouring plots were crown land north and south, to the west another man's estate and to the east estate land which had once belonged to Maecenas and still kept his name. There are various points of interest in this document. First the favourable terms of the lease applied for suggests the land was of poor quality, a feature which frequently recurs in reference to imperial land in Egypt. In this province imperial estates (*ousiai*) predominate in the Arsinoite nome which earlier, under the Ptolemies, had been the scene of large-scale agricultural reclamation and innovation. And within this nome (the Fayum) it is more often in the outlying areas that imperial estates are found. At Tebtunis in the south Fayum no arable land occurs amongst the imperial estates of the village, and around Karanis in the north-east Fayum it is in the outlying villages that such estates predominate, in lands which were difficult to irrigate and were amongst the earliest to go out of cultivation. A group of grain receipts from AD 158–9 from the district of Karanis covers a total area of 335 arouras of which 53 per cent is in the neighbourhood of Psenarpsenesis, and from the same district at the end of the second century a total of 1847 arouras of ousiac land is recorded of which 49 per cent is from around Psenarpsenesis and 14 per cent from Patsontis. Both Psenarpsenesis and Patsontis were outlying villages which disappear from the record, presumably sanded over, after the second decade of the third century, whereas Karanis itself continued on into the fifth century. Second of note in the Herakleia lease application is the plot called after Maecenas to the east of Doryphorus' land. It would appear that earlier both plots were

part of a larger tract of imperial land, part of which had been alienated under Augustus in a grant to Maecenas and which still kept the grantee's name. The location of imperial estates in Egypt therefore suggests that, rather than simply inheriting what Cleopatra had recently confiscated to finance her campaign (Dio 51.5.4–5, cf. 17.6–7; so Crawford, 1976, 40), Augustus may have made himself personally responsible for the *hypologos* land, land which was uncultivated and unproductive at the time of his conquest. The active reclamation which characterized Augustus' management of Egypt would, on this hypothesis, have been to the emperor's personal profit (Suetonius, *Augustus* 18.2; Dio 51.18.1; Brashear, 1979).

Whilst in Egypt, as in Asia, conquest lay at the base of imperial land-holding, confiscation and inheritance were without doubt the most common ways in which imperial land might grow (Hirschfeld, 1913, 544–75; Millar, 1977, 163–74). Both Tiberius and Nero were noted for their confiscations, and traces of Neronian confiscation in both Africa and Pisidia have already been mentioned. The confiscations of Septimius Severus which followed the defeat of Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger greatly extended the imperial land, which he laid claim to along with the Antonine name; the fall of Plautianus brought in further estates for the emperor with a special procurator to organize them.

Inheritance too increased imperial wealth. During his long lifetime Augustus acquired extensive property from bequests. In Campania for instance at Boscotrecase and in the Thracian Chersonnese he was heir to Agrippa's land. The sole heir of Maecenas and many others, Augustus set the pattern; later emperors benefited in like fashion, with Nero going so far as to require all Romans to include him in their wills.

The alienation of estates likewise took a variety of forms. The personal grants of the Julio-Claudians to their friends and family have already been mentioned; they are most easily traced in the papyrus records of Egypt. The scale of gift-giving was generous, with an expected return of unquestioning loyalty and hard work in the emperor's interest. In the one Fayum village of Philadelphia, for example, imperial land was bestowed on various members of the royal house - on Livia (Julia Augusta) and the children of Germanicus, Germanicus himself and Antonia wife of Drusus and mother of Claudius; on the *equites* Maecenas, Petronius and L. Annaeus Seneca; on the freedmen Pallas, Narcissus, Euodius and Doryphorus. Further recipients were Lurius, who may have commanded part of Octavian's fleet, Camillus, Dionysiodorus, Jucundus and Chresimus, Iucundus Grypianus, Tiberius Julius Nikanor, Decimus Valerius Asiaticus, Charmus and

Philodamus (Crawford, 1976, 61 with Hanson, 1984, 116–18). Some of these men are known, some unknown, but all are likely to have had imperial connections (Parassoglou, 1978, 24–6). Nowhere is the personal approach to imperial wealth and rule more clearly seen than in these grants by the Julio-Claudians to their dependants. This system of the temporary alienation of imperial land ended with the end of the dynasty and with the financial reorganization and consolidation of the Flavians.

On occasion, when short of cash for more immediate needs, emperors might sell their estates. Following the confiscations and extravagances of Nero, Galba put much of his predecessor's land up for sale, finding many willing purchasers. Nerva too sold land when he needed revenue and Pliny mentions with approval Trajan's willingness to dispose of imperial estates by sale. Inscriptions and papyri provide further evidence for the sale of estates (MacMullen, 1976, 24). On the whole however, to judge from the scale of Constantine's donations to the church (e.g. Eusebius, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 10. 6 for Carthage) and the extent of imperial estates surviving into the later Empire, the contrary tendency prevailed and overall the acquisition of estates by far outbalanced their alienation. Evidence, for instance, from AD 422 suggests that imperial holdings accounted for eighteen and a half per cent of Africa Proconsularis and fifteen per cent of Byzacena which must have represented a far larger percentage of the cultivable land within these provinces (Jones, 1964, 415–16). This may have been the picture elsewhere.

Administration and management

Like any landholder, the emperor derived profits from his estates in the rents and, outside Italy, the taxes which they produced. It was the scale of these estates which set the emperors apart. And whereas at a local level the management of imperial estates probably differed little from that of other large estates, at the provincial level the administration of these estates was closely bound in with the more general financial control of the Empire. The picture is rarely static with important changes and developments taking place over the period.

In the provinces the procuratorial system formed a framework for control and it was generally equestrian procurators who were responsible for the revenues from imperial estates. With well-staffed offices or *tabularia* these men were joined by assistant procurators, often of freedman status, with

responsibility for local areas, *tractus* or *regiones*. In Africa the larger *tractus* would seem to have been subdivided into *regiones* within which lay the individual *saltus* or estates. The administrative systematization this represents was probably the work of Vespasian (Broughton, 1929, 114–15). Regional offices were centred at Hadrumetum, Theveste, Thamugadi, Thugga and Hippo Regius (Pflaum, 1960–1, 381–5, 547; Kolendo, 1968, 325). The *lex Manciana* quoted in the long inscriptions of the Bagradas valley, as regulating the norms of landlord-tenant relations, may also be a Flavian enactment (Rostowzew, 1910, 321–9).

Regiones and possibly *tractus* are also found in Asia and other provinces too (Manacorda, 1976–7, 547). And, although the evidence for this regional administration is often from a later date, as in Africa the administrative structure may date in origin from the Flavian period. So, in a hellenized form, the *region Philadelphene* in Lydia probably included the Aga Bey estate, the peasants of which appealed to the Severan emperors in the early third century AD when some of their number had been arrested:

‘... and so we did the only thing possible, we informed your procurator in charge of the area (*taxis* = *tractus*?), Aurelius Marcianus, and your honourable procurators in Asia. We have become suppliants, most divine of emperors that have ever been, of your divine and transcendent sovereignty, since we have been hindered from attending to the tasks of cultivation by the threats of the police agents and their representatives to put us too, who remain, in danger of our lives, and we cannot, since we are prevented from working the land, even meet the imperial payments and other obligations for the immediate future. We beg you to favour our petition and order the representative of the people and your honourable procurators to exact justice for this wrong, and to prevent access to the imperial estates and the resultant molestation to us by both the police agents and those who, under the pretext of public office and liturgies, molest and trouble your farmers, since everything we have from our forefathers belongs by prior claim to the most sacred treasury by the law on cultivation. We have communicated the truth to your divinity. And unless some justice is exacted for these wrongs by your heavenly right hand and unless aid is brought for the future, we who are left, unable to endure the greed of the police agents and their representatives under the pretexts mentioned earlier, must abandon our ancestral homes and the tombs of our forefathers, and move to private land in order to save ourselves - since those who live a life of wrongdoing are more likely to spare those who live there than to spare your farmers - and in this way

we shall become fugitives from the imperial estates, on which we were born and reared and, continuing as farmers for generations, have been fulfilling our obligations to the imperial account.’ (Abbott and Johnson, 1926, 478–80, no. 142. 15–54)

The terms in which the peasants appeal will be discussed later, but in this context it is noteworthy that the appeal to the emperor comes only after an approach to the regional, and provincial authorities. In Lycia a *regeon Oino(andike)* is found based on Oenoanda and officials were attached to these regions. Whilst a third century regional centurion from Antioch in Pisidia is probably military, from Prymnessos in Phrygia an imperial freedman who was a *tabularius regionarius* from the *regio(nes) Ipsina et Moetana* seems likely to be an administrative official (Ballance, 1969, 143–6; cf. Torelli, 1969, 19–20 for a *servus regionarius* from Sardinia).

In Egypt the Flavians organized the *ousiai* of the Julio-Claudians into the *ousiai* of Vespasian and Titus with their own account (Parassoglou, 1978, 28–9); the lands carried the name of this imperial connection for centuries later.

The next significant development in the organization of the imperial estates would seem to belong to the reign of Hadrian. In Italy he assigned land for cultivation at Lanuvium (*Liber coloniarum*, p. 235), and in many parts of the Empire he reorganized the procuratorial system (Pflaum, 1950, 58–67). It is under Hadrian that in Egypt there first appears the category of land which is both ousiac and public (*ousiake kai demosia ge*) and the ousiac account (the *logos ousiakos*) was perhaps established in its final form in this reign. For the payment of dues corporate responsibility might be vested in a single individual. A new liturgical official, the *epiteretes*, is now found in connection with estates (Tomsin, 1964, 95–7; *P. Petaus* 75–8, introduction; *SB X.* 10761.5–6). Such officials came under the *praktore* *ousiakon* and were responsible for the payment of dues on palms, vineyards, pasture-land and other land which in Egypt was charged with a cash rent rather than one in kind. Generally in this reign imperial finances seem to have been overhauled and the *ratio privata* established as the imperial account (Lo Cascio, 1971–2, 87–8, 106–17).

The Severan dynasty has already been noted as a period of significant increase in the acreage of imperial estates. Large-scale confiscations were accompanied by yet further administrative reorganization (Strubbe, 1975, 249–50; Lo Cascio, 1971–2, 115–16). During the following century the Egyptian evidence shows a plethora of new officials involved in estate administration, a development which Diocletian attempted to control. One

phrontistes with two, or at the most three, assistants chosen by the *strategos* through the *boule* was now to replace separate *cheiristai*, *grammateis* and *phrontistai*; unnecessary expense might thus be avoided and the estates of the treasury receive proper attention. Given the scale and importance of these estates their history is inextricably bound up with that of imperial finances, with changes in their administration reflecting changes in the central financial administration of the Empire (Jones, 1964, 411–27).

At a local level, the management of imperial estates does not differ significantly from those of private land-owners. Throughout the Roman world alongside owner-exploitation the two most common forms of exploitation were, firstly, by tenants working under lease and, secondly, by bailiff or *vilicus* management with the land worked by slaves. With a range of local variations both these forms occur on imperial estates where the type of management found would seem to differ according to the type of land, its potential productivity and traditional patterns of local labour. The variety of terms found in the Greek and Latin sources reflects this variety.

Once again the African inscriptions may serve to introduce the subject. In the Bagradas valley a two-tier system of leases appears to be the predominant pattern. A *conductor* served as head-lessee, subletting the land to the tenants (*coloni*) on the various estates. Whereas the *conductores* would seem to come from the local aristocracy, from the top stratum perhaps of the sub-curial class, the *coloni* too may have been fairly substantial individuals with the economic potential for expanding their holdings (Garnsey, 1978, 234; Kehoe, 1982, 99–103, 124). Those with responsibility for cultivating the land are mentioned at the start of the Trajanic inscription from Henchir Mettich (*CIL* VIII, 25902) which records a letter from the procurators defining the application of the *lex Manciana*. Those responsible for the land are named as *domini aut conductores vilicive* (owners, lessors or bailiffs). In the actual letter lessors (*conductores*) and bailiffs (*vilici*) are frequently mentioned, owners less so; the wording may of course reflect the scope of the original enactment rather than its current application. The letter concerns a sharecropping system with special provisions for newly planted vines and fruit trees; a money rent, as in contemporary Egypt, is specified for flocks. Those farming the estate are called *coloni*, though there is also mention of *inquilini*, native labour perhaps from outside the estate, and *stipendarii*, possibly hired labour. The letter ends with details of corvée labour, ploughing, sowing and harvesting, to be provided for the *conductor* by the *coloni*. As a group the *coloni* are represented by a *defensor*, Flavius

Geminus, and by Lucius Victor son of Odilo, their *magister*, who sees to the erection of the inscription.

In the Ain el Djemela inscription from the reign of Hadrian, which may be supplemented from the Severan Ain Wassel altar with a copy of the same decision, the cultivation of marginal lands, *subseciva*, is the subject of imperial ruling. The petitioners, probably *coloni*, have complained about land taken up by the *conductores* but not exploited. Ruling through his *procurator* the emperor allows the petitioners to cultivate this land; provision is made for the payment of rent for five years (probably the normal length of a lease) to the original *conductor*, and after that to the treasury. *Coloni*, reasonably substantial individuals with the means of expanding into marginal land, are portrayed as in competition with the *conductores*. The corporate organization found here for imperial tenants occurs elsewhere in Africa and in other provinces; sharing in cult and social life these tenants formed identifiable groups with spokesmen to represent their interests, and like *coloni*, *conductores* too might come together in joint activity. In the joint record of religious dedications their shared identity of social and economic interests was boosted.

Lease arrangements might embody more general rules of cultivation; these were known and quoted. In the Commodan inscription from Suk el Khmis the *conductores* again hold a prime lease with tenants cultivating the land. The *coloni* of the *saltus Bur unit anus* complain of the behaviour of Allius Maximus and other *conductores* who, they claim, are colluding with the procurator to their disadvantage. They quote a general ruling on corvée labour which had been put up on bronze and was confirmed by procuratorial decree. The rhetoric of the self-description of the *coloni*, ‘mean men of the countryside (*homines rustici tenues*)’ is probably exaggerated yet, unable to compete with the richer *conductores* for the favour of the procurator, they appeal directly to the emperor. They should not be constrained beyond the provisions of the *lex Hadriana* and the procuratorial rulings; this is contrary to the long-established agreement, *contra perpetuam formam*. Like the established practice of the *lex Manciana* (*consuetudo Mandano*) to which the procurators refer in the Henchir Mettich text, or the rule of cultivation (*to dikaion tes georgias*) which the Asian tenants of Aga Bey recalled (p. 563 above), such accepted practices were important in defining the rights and duties of imperial tenants. When recorded on inscriptions it is the tensions of the conflicting interests of the emperor and his representatives, of the *conductores* and of the imperial tenants, which are the focus of attention. In the provinces procurators and *conductores* might act together to their mutual advantage;

direct appeal to the emperor was the most effective recourse for imperial tenants in trouble.

The African pattern of tenants-in-chief leasing imperial estates is found in other parts of the empire, in Egypt for instance under Nero, and in Asia, in Phrygia, Lycia, Caria and Lycaonia. In Greece such men were called *misthotai*. In general the systems of exploitation of imperial land differed little from those of private estates and the complex patterns repeat themselves with local variations throughout the Empire. As in the Bagradas valley with its five-year tenancies, some leases were long ones; elsewhere, as in Egypt, annual agreements were more regular. When labour is in short supply such distinctions are less significant than when it is plentiful. That the former was generally the case seems clear from the repeated threats of hard-pressed tenants to leave the land. The tenants of Aga Bey were not alone in threatening to abandon the emperor's estates.

Alongside both large and small scale tenancies of different duration, direct exploitation, through bailiffs and slaves, is found on many imperial estates. So from the *praedia Galbana* in Italy four bailiffs (*yilici*) join with the people (*pleps*) of the estate to dedicate a shrine to the *numen* of the imperial house; fifty-six names are listed in total. Of these, four were women, six or seven home-born slaves of the emperor and many others were slaves; but some of those with two names given were probably also tenants. The same combination of slave and free appears on Istrian estates likely to be imperial and in Italy where at Abella and Nola land grants were made by Vespasian to his slaves (*familia*) and tenants (*coloni*). There is more Italian evidence for bailiffs, as from Africa around Hippo, in Numidia and at Bisica. In Egypt where slaves had no role in traditional farming, exploitation by slaves never occurs. 'Those from the house (*oikos*) of Vespasian and Titus', who in the mid-third century AD are responsible for land in the Oxyrhynchite nome which was earlier private, are probably local officials representing the imperial estates. Empire-wide the patterns of management and farming of the imperial estates probably differed little from that of private land. What did differ was the status of the owner, the emperor, and the consequent ends to which this exploitation might be directed.

The emperor and his estates

Imperial interest in the best form of exploitation for imperial land may be

seen in a concern both for the uses to which it was put and in the condition of those who cultivated it. According to Pliny (*Natural History*, 18. 94–5), Augustus received reports from his procurators of a four-hundred fold grain yield in African Byzacium, and a similar sample was dispatched to Nero. Whilst the details of such stories cannot possibly be genuine the imperial concern they record might just be so. In the late-second century AD, in an attempt to bring imperial land back under cultivation, Pertinax granted ten years' tax remission to be followed by the grant of possession for the cultivator (Herodian 2. 4.6–7). The Hadrianic *lex de rudibus agris* quoted by the African *coloni* on the Ain Wassel altar (*CIL* VIII, 26416. ii 10–13) is an earlier imperial ruling which perhaps had a similar purpose, and the whole tenor of the big African inscriptions suggests different imperial attempts to ensure the cultivation of the estates of the Bagradas valley. The Henchir Mettich inscription, for instance, in recalling provisions of the *lex Manciana*, defines various share-cropping arrangements for arable crops, wine, oil, honey and fruit-trees (*CIL* VIII, 25902). The lower rate of one quarter of the crop specified for beans, in contrast to the more usual third, represents a recognition of the beneficial effect on the land of this crop; such nitrogenous plants were to be encouraged. The special provision of five years' reduced rent for newly planted figs, vines and grafted olives, and ten years' for new olive trees may reflect a similar agricultural concern.

Suitable crops were one problem, labour another; and in their repeated attempts to secure a labour force the emperors fought a perpetual shortage of manpower. Unwilling to lose revenue, emperors were forced to seek inducements to keep the peasants on the land and to keep the land under cultivation. Egypt, as so often, provides the fullest evidence. Under the Julio-Claudians imperial tenants might be granted a protected status. With the label *apolusimoi* they appear to have escaped the control of the local tax collectors; liable still to poll-tax and other dues, they had the privilege of direct payment, thus avoiding the collection charges that others paid. In Philadelphia, for instance, under Claudius imperial tenants paid an annual poll-tax of forty drachmas, whilst other tenants paid forty drachmas, plus four drachmas four collection charges (Hanson, 1984, 113–18). Whether this privilege in regard to the payment of poll-tax is the same as the tax-free status (*ateleia*) of imperial *ousiai* which is recorded in several Julio-Claudian documents is not clear. Some if not all of these *ousiai* also provided protection from compulsory orders, and according to a lead tag which may once have hung around the neck of a draught animal, imperial land which had once belonged to Agrippina and Rutilia was *atelen kai anengareuton*, free from tax and compulsory orders (*SB* 4226 with

Parassoglou, 1978, 18, 57).

Later emperors protected their tenants in different ways. Antoninus Pius ruled that, although lacking the right of deportation, imperial procurators were entitled to exclude from imperial estates any who might injure or harm imperial *coloni* (*Dig. I. 19.3*). Marcus Aurelius and Verus exempted *conductores* from civic obligations (*munera municipalia*) and this exemption was extended to *coloni Caesaris* under the Severans (*Dig. L. 6.6.10–11*; Millar, 1977, 180). That such rulings were not always observed is but a reflection of the realities of life.

Encouragement and inducement was one way of securing labour. Another, of course, was compulsion for which Egypt again provides evidence. The edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander in AD 68 specifically forbade the tying of farmers to cultivation - a sure sign of the practice. In the second century AD *epimerismos*, the assignment of poorer land to peasants from more profitable areas, became a regular practice.

The emperor made use of his estates in a variety of ways. The personal donations of the Julio-Claudians have already been discussed ([p. 558](#) above) and in the fourth century Constantine's endowment of his church was on a scale unparalleled in earlier centuries. The extent of the emperor's estates was a measure of his prestige and pre-eminence. Rivals lost their land and competitors were curbed. The confiscations of a Nero (Tacitus, *Annales* 14. 65) or a Septimius Severus (SHA, *Severus* 12.3; *ILS* 1370; 1421–3; *CIL* XIV, 5344) may be understood in the context of prestige politics. In a more tangible way land well cultivated brought in rents and taxes or produce which might be used by the emperor for the purposes of imperial *liberalitas* - to feed the army or the people of Rome. Poor land might be brought under cultivation or imperial land used for the large-scale production of particular crops. And there were other uses. In Numidia in the second century AD the coincidence between imperial land and veteran settlement suggests the use of estates to subsidize the military commitments of the state. Alternatively it may reflect the employment of veterans to cultivate imperial land - a further sign of the perennial shortage of labour in this period (Fentress, 1979, 134–42 for details).

In the case of oil production, economic ends are linked with imperial *liberalitas*. The widespread extension of olive cultivation in Africa under Roman rule is well documented both from inscriptions and from remains on the ground. When after his seizure of both Rome and the Empire Septimius Severus, concerned to retain his power, instituted free oil for the people of Rome (*SHA Severus* 18.3 cf. 23.2) it was to Africa he looked for its supply. New officials appear in the *regiones* of Tripolis and Lepcis, from

where Severus came. In *amphorae* produced locally, in Tripolitania and Bizacena, African oil produced on private estates (e.g. Peyras, 1975) was joined by that from the estates of the emperor newly enlarged by confiscation. Under Severus these areas flourished and Africa joined Baetica as a major supplier of Rome (Manacorda, 1976–7; 1977).

For oil, as for wine, the close study of the forms and stamps of the *amphorae* used in its transport fills out the evidence of the literary and epigraphical sources. Patterns of production begin to appear, the organization of the trade to surface (Garnsey, Hopkins and Whittaker, 1983, 27–35, 76–117, 145–62). For grain, however, the containers are lost; apart from mills and silos the archaeological evidence is scant. Yet imperial concern with the corn supply may be charted through the career records of officials both regular and extraordinary. The Trajanic official in Africa with responsibility for buying up corn to feed Rome (*curator frumenti comparandi in annonam urbis*) or the Severan procurator who looked after the provision of corn in the *tractus* of Numidia can be compared to the similar official with responsibility for buying up oil in the region of Tripolitania, a post which first occurs under Marcus Aurelius (Manacorda, 1976–7, 543–55). The evidence for such officials coincides with that for the location of imperial estates. Concentrated in Africa and Egypt, estates of the emperors are likely to have played a significant role in supplying both the capital and other large cities with the grain they required; they might similarly serve the needs of the army.

It would seem, therefore, that the character of imperial estates changed over time. The evidence suggests that they were originally regarded as personal possessions and acquired, disposed of and organized in a variety of *ad hoc* and sometimes haphazard ways. Increasingly, however, they appear to have become an important institution of the Empire. In particular, the apparent coincidence between areas of large imperial landholding and the production of key crops for the supply both of Rome and of the army suggests that the emperor as landholder played a central role in the economy of the Roman Empire.

• THE • MONETARY • SYSTEM •

John Kent

The imperial coinage of Rome remains one of the major testimonies of the power of the Roman government in its hey-day, and to the strength of the ideal of Rome in its decline. It came into being quite unsystematically, gradually taking over the roles of its Republican precursor, and retaining for many years ambivalent, quasi-republican features.

‘Imperial’ coinages, issues struck in the provinces on behalf of generals, began in the first quarter of the first century BC. With Julius Caesar these field issues reached enormous proportions, and in 44 BC, he finally took the ‘regal’ step of placing his portrait on the coinage of Rome itself (pl. 22.1, 1). Much of this coinage was created to pay the swollen armies of the civil war; it therefore consisted primarily of silver *denarii*, accompanied by gold *aurei* for the higher ranks. Recognizable features of the true imperial coinage - gold and silver with the commander’s name and effigy - had thus appeared. The systematic issue of related small change was still in the future; the Empire still relied upon local or regional coinages for this purpose. During the next hundred years, the ‘local’ bronze coinage of Rome came to supersede the mélange of colonial, municipal and tribal issues that inadequately supplied western needs. East of the Adriatic the tradition and supply of base local ‘autonomous’ currency was more firmly established. Not until the later third century AD did these local issues give way to an empire-wide imperial coinage. Eastern imperial coinage in silver, too, related in type and standard to the Greek tetradrachm, a practice which survived in Egypt down to 296. Most eastern issues, silver and bronze alike, were inscribed in Greek, but were assimilated to the Roman monetary system of *denarii* and *asses* (pl. 22.1,

2). Only the gold coins, which few will have handled, were fully 'Roman', 'imperial' and empire-wide from their inception.

In the early days of the Empire, the use of coin-types for the exposition of imperial ideals, aims and achievements was hesitant. Even the imperial effigy did not become an invariable feature of the imperial bronze coinage for a very long time; well into the second century, the tiny *quadrantes* lacked a portrait. The importance of the portrait is however clear enough, for on at least two occasions, the deaths of Caligula and of Geta, the *damnatio memoriae* following the fall of an emperor was associated with the attempted withdrawal or defacement of his coins.

The theoretical Roman imperial monetary system was inherited from the Republic, and may be briefly summarized here:

1 *aureus* = 25 *denarii*

1 *denarius* = 16 *asses*

In practice, things were more complicated. An inscription from Pergamum of the time of Hadrian deals with the 'buying' and 'selling' of *denarii* against *asses*, and shows that silver commanded a premium over bronze; exchange between the two metals necessitated the intervention of the moneychanger, and the payment of his commission. It is likely that gold in turn commanded a premium over silver. In times of instability or uncertainty in money supply, these exchange rates probably altered, as was known they did in the later Empire, and festivals and fairs may even have brought seasonal fluctuations, as was certainly the case in the middle ages. In the fourth century, the speculative movement of coins from one province to another was specifically prohibited, and analogies may be recognized in the trafficking in currencies so important in modern finance. In fifth-century Rome, *solidi* had to be sold to official *nummularii*, who made a living by receiving from the treasury slightly more coppers than they had given for each gold *solidus*. Coinage was therefore a commodity like any other. Its peculiar characteristic lay in being essentially a tool of government policy, being used to purchase or reward services to the state, and to exploit private resources through taxation. Its general use, by the state and others, gave coins an acceptability above that of their simple worth as ingots; this fiduciary value, too often abused by impoverished or unscrupulous governments, means that the use of coinage is inflationary by its very nature. Much of the history of the Roman imperial coinage is based on this fact.

The imperial coinage evolved in stages from the chaos of ‘imperatorial’ issues that followed Caesar’s assassination. By 35 BC only Mark Antony and Octavian survived as contenders for power. After Actium, Octavian was in his own words *potitus rerum omnium*, and subsequent constitutional development merely formalized, refined and helped to make acceptable his absolute position. He took the name ‘Augustus’ at the start of 27 BC, and from that date his official personal name, ‘Imperator Caesar Augustus’, became an integral part of the style of almost every emperor. The reign of Augustus saw the introduction for the first time since the third century BC of a full range of denominations in all metals. Not all were struck simultaneously, but all were related metrologically and all were current together. The pattern established during the first half of his principate was to endure for almost three centuries.

During the first part of Augustus’ reign, the ‘local’ character of his coinage remained marked. Gold and silver down to about 20 BC retained a very personal typology, with much allusion to his military triumphs of the Thirties and to the personal honours bestowed upon him. Thereafter, the emphasis changed. Reminiscences of Naulochus and Actium continued for another ten years, but were steadily and at length totally replaced by types relating to the succession. Particular emphasis was laid upon Gaius and Lucius Caesar ([pl. 22.1, 3](#)), and at the very last, Tiberius.

The location of the western imperial mints for the precious metals at this period is far from certain. Substantial series have without sufficient reason been attributed to Spain on the basis of similarities with Spanish civic bronze, while Rome was certainly used for about a decade between 20 and 10 BC. During Augustus’ last twenty years the precious metal mint, guarded by a cohort, was at Lyon: according to Strabo, ‘the rulers of Rome coin their money there, both silver and gold’. Bronze coinage in the

Gold (98% fine)		Silver (97% fine)		Brass (orichalcum)		Copper	
Aureus	7.85 g	Denarius	3.76 g	Sestertius	25.00 g	As	10.50 g
$\frac{1}{2}$ Aureus	3.93 g	Quinarius	1.88 g	Dupondius	12.00 g	Quadrans	3.15 g

The copper *semissis* was occasionally issued by later emperors.

Theoretical relationships									
Aureus	1								
$\frac{1}{2}$ Aureus	2	1							
Denarius	25	12½	1						
Quinarius	50	25	2	1					
Sestertius	100	50	4	2	1				
Dupondius	200	100	8	4	2	1			
As	400	200	16	8	4	2	1		
Semissis	800	400	32	16	8	4	2	1	
Quadrans	1600	800	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

Figure 22.1 Comparative values of Roman coinage

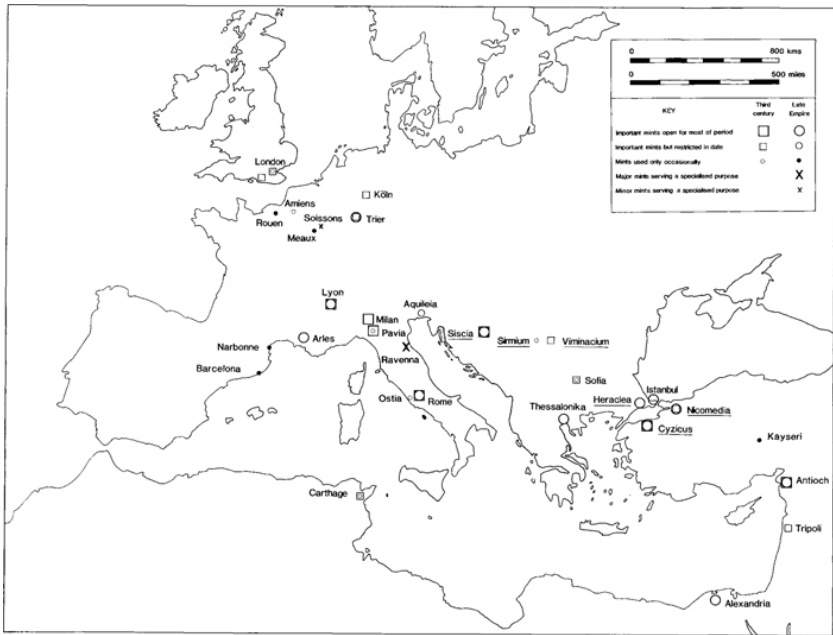


Figure 22.2 Map of the Roman Empire showing the distribution of mints

west was for long dependent on enormous issues of quasi-civic coins of

Nimes (Nemausus) (pl. 22.1, 4), probably though not certainly *asses*, which were sometimes halved. These were supplemented by brass and copper issues of Rome, bearing the names of the Roman moneyers. Their most notable feature was the letters SC, dominating one side; though this massive coinage came to circulate freely all over the west, the emphasis on the Decree of the Senate gives even these issues a somewhat ‘civic’, or at least regional look. Only *asses* bore Augustus’ head, and some denominations did not even carry his name (pl. 22.1, 5). The *asses* of Nemausus were replaced in Gaul towards the end of the first century BC by more sophisticated issues from Lyon, whose provincial character is emphasized by the type of the altar of Rome and Augustus. ‘Imperial’ provincial bronze coinages of restricted currency were also struck in Asia, Syria and Egypt, but apart from the latter, made comparatively slight impact on the mass of local issues.

Much of the coinage of Augustus is poor in style and experimental, almost makeshift, in character. By the end of his reign, something like stability had been achieved, and this was reinforced by the well-known conservatism of Tiberius. The latter’s issues show a tendency for types to be extremely conventional, and to remain unaltered for years on end; there is however a marked improvement in style and technique. Imperial coinage in the western half of the Empire was concentrated at two centres: Lyon, for gold and silver; Rome, for brass and copper. At Lyon, a single type, the enthroned figure of Pax, served for *aurei* and *denarii* throughout most of the reign; the ROM ET AVG bronze coinage, so important in Augustus’ later years, virtually ceased. Brass and copper issues of Rome were not produced continuously; *asses* were struck in 16, *sestertii*, *dupondii* and *asses* in 23 and again in 35–37. As under Augustus, the presumptive successor, Tiberius’ son Drusus the Younger, received much attention. There is however a developing use of a face of the coin for ‘propaganda’. A specific illustration of the beneficence of the imperial government may be seen on the *sestertius* celebrating the emperor’s generosity to the cities of Asia, ruined in the earthquake of 17. The personified virtues of Justice, Well-being, Mercy, Moderation, Good Fortune and Piety are representative of the many qualities of the emperor and his heir which future coinages were to exploit; the gods themselves were as yet absent, with the exception of the deified Augustus, founder of the dynasty (pl. 22.1, 8).

Succeeding reigns followed a similar pattern of regular, though much scarcer, gold and silver from Lyon, and sporadic brass and copper from Rome. Precious metal types of Gaius are almost exclusively dynastic, the uncontroversial commemoration of his dead father and mother, and of the

deified Augustus. The lower denominations were more adventurous, including his dead brothers and living sisters. A massive issue of *asses* without imperial name celebrated Agrippa. The reason for its issue on so vast a scale is not known, particularly since Caligula is said to have disliked mention of his grandfather; its date however is certain.

Under Claudius, the precious metals and those of copper alloy retained their separate styles and techniques. It has been thought that the Lyon mint ceased to produce gold and silver, and was merged with that of Rome during Gaius' reign. Be this as it may, it is not until the end of Nero's reign that any real rapprochement between precious and base metal coins can be detected. Claudian gold and silver continue the dynastic theme, honouring the emperor's parents Drusus the Elder and Antonia, his wife Agrippina and adopted son Nero. Brass and copper coins follow the same pattern, adding the emperor's late brother Germanicus. Many types are personal to the emperor and his achievements, such as the *sestertius* SPES AVGVSTA - Claudius was born on 1 August, sacred to Spes - and the precious metal DE BRITANN, celebrating the successful invasion of Britain.

A severe contraction of the money-supply seems to be characteristic of the years following AD 40, and it is no doubt in this context that forgery and countermarking flourished. Particularly vulnerable to forgery were the common *dupondii* of Antonia and the *asses* of Agrippa and Claudius (pl. 22.1, 6, 7). There was also a large output of false *denarii*, silver-plated surfaces on base cores, which copied not only the rare current issues, but also the abundant coinages of Augustus and Tiberius. Countermarks were freely applied to official base-metal coins, particularly those circulating on frontiers. Occasionally their meaning is clear: thus, DVP on a *sestertius* or AS on a *dupondius* evidently halved the face value of coins so stamped; PROB presumably gave the coin a validity that it would otherwise have lacked. The effect of the numerous imperial initials (pl. 22.1, 8) and cyphers cannot be determined, but it is likely that they asserted the continued acceptability and value of coins that might otherwise have been refused or heavily discounted.

The reign of Nero marks the transition from the experimental days of the early Empire to a norm that prevailed down to the mid-third century. During his first ten years, the existing situation continued to deteriorate. No brass and copper was struck at Rome, and the gold mint, though its location at this date is disputed, produced a steadily decreasing output. The earliest of these coins are interesting for their association of Nero with his mother Agrippina, but her effigy was used only briefly.

In 64, Nero carried out a comprehensive and lasting reform of the

coinage. Gold and silver coin was reduced in weight, the silver also in fineness. *Aurei* began to be produced in very large numbers, sufficient to dominate the currency for the next hundred years. *Denarii*, though more abundant than their predecessors, were not particularly numerous, and certainly failed to oust the large existing issues of the Republic and early Empire, which circulated down to the end of the first century. It is likely that the occasion of the reform was used to remove the coinage of precious metals from Lyon to Rome. The initial reform of the bronze coinages seems to have involved producing all denominations in brass (*orichalcum*), from the *sestertius* of c. 27.00 g down to the tiny *quadrans* of c. 2.00 g. To facilitate their recognition by the public, the new *dupondii*, *asses* and *semisses* received marks of value, $\overline{\text{P}}$, T and S respectively. This elegant and logical arrangement soon reverted to the former bimetallic system, and the *dupondius* and *as*, now almost the same size once more, were distinguished by the addition of rays to Nero's head on the *dupondius* (pl. 22.1, 9). The Lyon mint continued active, producing a large output of brass and copper coins; its products can be recognized by a distinctive style, and the presence of a small globe at the point of truncation of the emperor's head. Artistry rises to considerable heights on issues from both mints, and there are many interesting topical and architectural types. The care lavished on the coinage may well reflect Nero's own artistic tastes.

Nero's fall in 68 was followed by a year and a half of confusion, during which three emperors rose and fell. The successive coinages of Galba, Otho and Vitellius were supplemented by ephemeral issues for Clodius Macer in Africa, and anonymous coinages in Gaul. The latter were, as Tacitus (*Histories* IV. 36, 58) seems to imply, acceptable Roman donatives which usefully left open the identity of the donor at a time when the outcome of the civil wars seemed doubtful.

With the establishment of the Flavian dynasty, the coinage settled down to the norm which had evolved under Nero. Main issues were, naturally, in the name of the reigning emperor; subsidiary coinages naming other personages were of greater or lesser importance, at the emperor's will. We have already seen the extensive commemoration of ancestors, not necessarily deified, by the Julio-Claudians. Living and dead relatives such as wives, sons and daughters now found a regular place; sometimes, as in the case of Faustina I (pl. 22.1, 10), this was out of genuine affection, in other cases, such as Sabina, the unloved wife of Hadrian (pl. 22.1, 11), to emphasize her husband's insistence that she be given the honours due to her. Sons are displayed on the coinage to advertise the hope of dynastic stability. As sons of reigning emperors, they bore the name of Caesar, and

only acquired the *praenomen* Imperator if they were adult and with military experience. Thus, Titus, son of Vespasian (pl. 22.1, 12), and Carinus and Numerian, sons of Carus, appear with the laurel wreath and title of an Imperator; Marcus Aurelius on the other hand, and the many little third-century boys without military command, lack the title Imperator, and appear bare-headed (pl. 22.1, 13). By the fourth century, Caesar had become a mere title, and its holders seem invariably to have received a salutation as Imperator on appointment. The style of an emperor's son, daughter or wife was now 'Nobilissimus, -a', an epithet that probably reached back to the second century (pl. 22.1, 14). Into the third century, acclamation by the army as Imperator was an authentic reaction to military success by the emperor or his legates. By the end of the century this in turn had become formalized, the emperor being acclaimed on his accession, and thereafter on the anniversaries of his *dies imperii*, the number of acclamations thus denoting the year of the reign. Coins attest the annual salutations down to the middle of the fifth century (pl. 22.1, 15), but it was a logical step for Justinian to abandon them for a plain regnal year.

Policy over reverse types and inscriptions varied. Some emperors, such as Trajan, proclaimed an unchanging message, SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI, using a vast range of designs to illustrate the imperial 'excellence' - scenes of conquest, buildings, figures of gods and personified virtues (pl. 22.2, 16, 17). By the second quarter of the third century, however, the constructive use of coinage to convey imperial policy was largely at an end, and reverses are mainly devoted to personifications of an emperor's ideal qualities. No doubt the specific choice was often topical; in the later Empire, there is some evidence for pageants in the Circus in Rome, perhaps a normal part of the *Pompa Circensis*, at which the crowd was edified by inscribed tableaux, dwelling upon military valour and imperial victory (Eunapius, frag. 78). The *pompa* described by Ovid for example included Victoria as well as gods. These occasions may well have provided opportunities for loyal demonstrations, and form an obvious link with coin design. A specifically Roman origin also goes far to account for the parochial character of some of the designs, which appear unintelligible and devoid of significance to anyone beyond the capital. In spite of the care taken over both obverses and reverse for a century and a half after Nero's reform, it has been doubted whether the 'message' of the imperial coinage reached, or was even directed to a particular public, or indeed served any purpose but the boosting of the imperial ego. Certainly the third-century emperors seem to have lost interest in the reverses, and as will be seen below, the late Empire had very different notions about coin design.

The effigy of an emperor was sacrosanct; to deface or reject it was treason, the repudiation of his authority; to accept an emperor's coin was, on the contrary, to acknowledge his rule. The importance of the name and likeness is a natural corollary. During the first three centuries of the Empire, much care was taken in all branches of representational art to create a consistent, characteristic and easily recognizable official portrait. It is impossible to say whether realism was the aim, but it is inevitable that likenesses will have flattered the vanity of their subjects, however strange it may seem that the portraits of Nero (pl. 22.1, 9) and Caracalla (pl. 22.2, 18), for example, should have pleased those emperors. Dio in fact tells us that the latter cultivated a ferocious expression, a habit that would have shocked Marcus Aurelius, from whom he took his official name. The late Empire, with its very different concept of the ruler, rejected anything more than the most basic concessions to individuality. Had 'market research', or perhaps the advent of emperors from lower strata of society, brought the realization that trouble taken over a characterized portrait and a carefully thought out reverse type was just a waste of time and effort? Between the accession of Vespasian and that of Severus, changes in the coinage were gradual at first, then accelerated during the last half of the second century. The silver content of the *denarius* steadily declined. From an approximate fineness of 90 per cent under Nero, the figure had sunk to 70 per cent by the death of Commodus. During the same period, the base metal coinage also suffered; the zinc content fell from around 20 per cent to 5 per cent, being largely replaced by lead. Lead was also used increasingly to adulterate the copper *asses*, and the result was to create a softer and more corrodible alloy.

The reigns of Severus and Caracalla marked a critical stage in the development of the coinage. The former reduced the silver content of the *denarius* to 50 per cent, without alteration to the *aureus*, thus fatally imperilling the relationship between the two denominations. Under Hadrian, the basic relationship of 25:1 will still have been valid, assuming gold to have been ten times more precious than silver, and Dio Cassius implies that it still existed under Marcus Aurelius. Sixty years later, the *denarius* had lost a third of its silver, while the *aureus* remained unchanged, and it is very likely that Severan *denarii* were, legally or otherwise, discounted in commerce. This is the most likely explanation for the creation in 215 by Caracalla of a new and large denomination of silver coin (pl. 22.2, 18, 19), alongside a slightly lighter *aureus*. It is generally called the 'antoninianus', borrowing the name from one of the innumerable imaginary coins cited by the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*; it is a harmless

convention, provided it is recognized as having no ancient authority. Its nominal value is harder to determine. With a weight around 5.20 g it may have restored a piece tariffed at twenty-five to the new *aureus*, and have been specifically designed for military pay. This solution may imply that the market discount on the *denarius* had been officially recognized, and that the latter now passed at the rate of, say, thirty-six to the *aureus*. It may also have been accepted that not all *denarii* were equal, and the moneychangers can be imagined having a busy and profitable time working out the market rates for the numerous surviving first- and second-century issues. Other solutions have been proposed. Some have seen the new coin (which is about half as heavy again as a *denarius*) as a grossly inflationary double *denarius*, others as a *denarius* and a half to a *denarius* of unchanged value. Both theories assume a greater control of market forces than seems possible for an ancient government, and the hoarding of antoniniani together with various qualities of *denarius* suggests that, at least in practice, natural relationships determined by silver content were in operation.

The antoninianus had a very distinctive appearance. Emperors' heads were radiate as on the *dupondius*, but a novel feature was the crescent moon behind the shoulders of empresses (pl. 22.2, 19). The new denomination was struck side by side with the *denarius* for about five years, and then was abruptly discontinued; presumably the requirements of military pay will have been met by increasing the output of *denarii*. Strangely, the crescent bust was not immediately adopted for the *dupondii* of empresses. This logical step was not taken until the reign of Severus Alexander, some years after the antoninianus had ceased to be struck.

However, the continuation without rival of the *denarius* through the reigns of Elagabalus, Alexander and Maximinus I proved to be its swansong. Although it maintained a vestigial existence, in 238 it was replaced for all practical purposes by the antoninianus, revived at a lighter weight, and at an ever-decreasing silver fineness. By 250, debased antoniniani had sunk to the metallic equivalent of Severan *denarii* many of which were now overstruck by Decius (pl. 22.2, 20) and Gallus. Since 238, the weight of the *aureus* had fallen *pari passu* with the decline of the silver coin, and into the reign of Gallienus, when the smallest *aurei* weighed no more than 1.25 g. Corresponding antoniniani contained little more than 10 per cent silver. The virtual impracticability of striking smaller gold coins now led to the abandonment of the old stable relationships between gold and silver coin. Credit for recognizing and acting upon this necessity belongs to Postumus, rebel emperor of Gaul, but Gallienus speedily followed suit, and large gold coins became once more the rule. In the late Empire, the

relationship of gold coin to the others varied according to government edict and market rates, and this system must have its origin at this time. Actual weight standards varied from reign to reign, and it is not possible to say what factors determined them.

Between its creation in 215 and the end of Gallienus' reign, the antoninianus had lost getting on for 95 per cent of its metallic worth, and no doubt also of its purchasing power. The results of this inflation were dramatic. A vast increase in production was necessary, if a monetary economy was to continue at the same level. This was tackled in two ways; first by the doubling of the establishment of the mint of Rome itself, second by the permanent setting up of provincial imperial mints. The mint of Rome was divided into six work units, called *officinae*; these are known from inscriptions, but are first indicated on the coinage in 248. The number was doubled under Gallienus, and the slap-dash style of his later coins illustrates the pressure under which they worked. From the reign of Gordian III, provincial mints increasingly supplemented the supply of coin. Antioch, Milan (pl. 22.2, 21), Trier and (?) Viminacium had all come into existence by 260; Lyon, Siscia and Cyzicus followed in the next decade. Of the old Greek imperial mints, only Alexandria survived, its tetradrachms (pl. 22.2, 26, 27) as poor-looking and base as the antoniniani.

The brass and copper currency, and the related city issues in the east, collapsed in the 260s. An antoninianus of Gallienus was the approximate metallic equivalent of an *as*, and there is no reason to believe that it was worth any more. After a brief attempt to upvalue the old bronze coinage in the early 260s, suggested by Postumus' restriking of old *sestertii* with his new radiate types (pl. 22.2, 22), the entire weight of the currency was borne by the debased antoniniani. Abundant as these coins are, it may be questioned whether output was really sufficient. And with each successive issue of the 260s being struck in an inferior alloy and poorer style, it is not surprising that forgery became rife (pl. 22.2, 23, 24); who could be sure how small, how base or how bad in style the latest official coins might be? Many of the counterfeits were illiterate and tiny, no more than a quarter of the size of the prototypes, and this is a reminder that, common as these coins appear to us, there were levels of society that handled coin so infrequently as to have but little idea of the aspect of an authentic imperial antoninianus. The fineness of coins was in any case very difficult to determine, since even the basest issues were so treated as to present a silvery surface.

A partial resolution of the crisis came under Aurelian. A bloody insurrection involving the moneyers in Rome doubtless marks a stage in the

progress of that formidable emperor towards putting the empire to rights. There followed a reform, in which the mints of Rome, Pavia (newly transferred from Milan) and Siscia received dies with a common style, and in which the radiate base silver coin was increased in weight to about 4.25 g and was often marked XXI (pl. 22.2, 25). As the eastern mints were brought into the system, a Greek equivalent, KA, was used as an alternative. Analyses make it certain that this formula denotes twenty parts of alloy to one of silver. The coin was thus approximately metallically equal to two early imperial *asses*. It is often represented as a deflationary step, but this is unlikely. The contemporary alteration in the Alexandrian tetradrachm involved a reduction in weight of about 20 per cent (pl. 22.2, 26, 27), and this would suggest that in terms of *denarii* of account, the reformed radiate of Aurelian was tarified at about double that of his first year, perhaps four or five *denarii*. The reform was intended to reintroduce other denominations, at least at Rome. A smaller laureate coin is not uncommon, and is sometimes inscribed VSV, perhaps an indication that it was worth half the piece with XXI. A larger laureate coin of some 8.0 g has no silver content at all, and may represent the *denarius* itself. Still larger bronze pieces are very rare and may be donative in purpose. The radiate alone survived Aurelian's reign in regular currency. Later reigns occasionally produce pieces inscribed IA or X ET I, or with a double tier of rays from the emperor's head. These contain 10 per cent of silver and so were worth double the ordinary coin. They are very rare, and must have been exceedingly difficult for the general public to recognize.

Coinage remained outwardly stable for twenty years after Aurelian's reform. Inflation of the *denarius* was doubtless tackled by periodic revaluation of the actual coins, and the principal interest of these lies in the steady evolution of the system of mint-marks and in the exotic portraiture. Each mint still produced its own range of reverse types, and even the obverse portraits and titulature were very far from uniform. The imposition of explicit mint-marks was therefore not essential, and remained somewhat random down to the time of Diocletian's reform. However, many of the features that were later to become standard make their appearance; the initial of the mint, sometimes preceded by the formula SM (*Sacra Moneta*: 'Imperial Mint') and accompanied by a numeral denoting the *officina*; sometimes a symbol, such as wreath, star, palm-branch or crescent, or a letter or group of letters, defining particular issues. The tentative introduction of such marks between Philip and Gallienus (pl. 22.2, 21) has already been noted. In the time of the latter begins the use of unusual effigies and titulature. Gallienus introduces armed, helmeted and consular

portraits, and remarkable legends: GALLIENAE AVGVSTAE (a ‘hypercorrect’ form of the vocative), GALLIENVM AVG SENATVS (recalling some honour bestowed by the Senate on its ruler). Postumus, his contemporary, brings in the facing bust, and also has himself represented as Hercules, with lion-skin and club. Armed and consular effigies enjoyed a particular vogue at the mints of Pavia (pl. 22.2, 25) and Siscia. The mint of Serdica was fond of grandiose titulatures, derived from the language of acclamation:

BONO IMP C PROBO P F INVICT AVG

DEO ET DOMINO PROBO INVICTO AVG

PERPETVO IMP C M AVR PROBO AVG

Regularly associated with the armed effigies we find VIRTVS POSTVMI OR FLORIANI or PROBI OR CARI OR DIOCLETIANI AVG, the personification of the emperor by his own valour. The personified qualities of the rulers gave rise naturally to association, if not identification, with particular gods. In the second century, it was still regarded as monstrous that Commodus should identify himself with Hercules (pl. 22.2, 28), and Caracalla specifically rejected such an identification. But when Postumus followed the example of Commodus, it seems to have passed without adverse comment, and from this time dates the systematic start of the use of quasi-divine *praenomina* as cult replacements for the regular *Imperator Caesar*, though they are little used on coins.

The mint-organization of the early Empire came under the emperor’s *a rationibus*, who controlled a *familia monetalis* administered by a procurator. It is doubtful if the senatorial *tresviri* who figure on the ‘local’ Roman coinage of Augustus retained even a nominal connection with the mint. The *familia* was, as its name suggests, servile or semi-servile and hereditary in character. Inscriptions show that it included specialized workmen, and some of its operations were so disagreeable that criminals could be condemned to work there. As imperial mints were established in the provinces, this organization was set up in the favoured cities; the *monetarii* of Cyzicus are said to have formed one of the principal classes of the city. Supervision of the mints remained with the retitled *Rationalis Summae Rei* in the third and early fourth centuries, and passed to the *Sacrae Largitiones* when this was defined under the sons of Constantine.

The late imperial coinage begins suddenly, with a reform executed by Diocletian in and after 293. As befits a plan of that great organizer, the reform was of majestic scope, empire-wide, deeply thought out and seminal

to all later developments. It swept away the last traces of local coinage, introduced fundamental changes in the denominations, style, typology and organization of the coinage, points which will be considered in turn. In the first place, it was a coinage stable in gold and for long periods also in silver. Diocletian stabilized the weight of the *aureus* at one-sixtieth of a pound, about 5.20 g, early in his reign; under him and his immediate successors coins were often marked with the Greek numeral Ξ (60) to denote this. Constantine the Great reduced the standard of his gold coin to one-seventy-second of a pound, about 4.45 g, in 309, and his successive victories over rival emperors meant that by 324 it had become the standard for the whole empire. This coin which is known as the *solidus* (pl. 22.2, 29), originally a generic name for any stable gold piece, remained virtually inviolate until the eleventh century. It was regular for imperial donatives to be made in *solidi* and this explains why they are so much more abundant than gold coins of the early Empire. From the beginning, half-*solidi* (*semisses*) were produced in small numbers, and, rather puzzlingly, three-eighths of *solidi*; the latter, which must have served some special purpose when introduced, gave way about 385 to the more logical thirds of *solidi* (*tremisses*). *Tremisses* became very much more abundant in the fifth century; perhaps, like third-and quarter-guineas in eighteenth-century England, they were useful in an age when little silver was struck. Gold coin in the late Empire was of a high standard of fineness, except for a brief period in the late 350s and early 360s, when control briefly slackened, and a few light-weight issues were struck by the usurper Magnentius.

Although third-century radiates were struck with a silvery surface, however base their alloy, no Roman 'silver' coin since the second century, apart from Carausius' emergency issues in Britain, had actually contained more silver than base metal. Diocletian revived a true silver coinage in 293. It reproduced the Neronian *denarius* in both weight and fineness (pl. 22.2, 30), but its name and valuation are unknown, and it ceased to be struck before 310. Down to 324 a motley series of more or less base pieces of widely varying weights and fineness, all struck by Constantine I, presents a picture of confusion. Thereafter, there was lasting improvement. Constantine revived the Diocletianic piece, and supplemented it by multiples. A new silver piece of about 2.00 g, was introduced c. 358 and was an immediate success. Metallically, it will have been worth about thirty to the *solidus*. Very large numbers of these coins were struck, particularly in the west, down to the beginning of the fifth century (pl. 22.2, 31), when the coinage of silver was drastically curtailed; it has been thought that cessation of the supply of the metal from Britain was a major contributory

factor to this collapse of the silver currency. Nevertheless, there was no consequential debasement, and small issues continued to be made from time to time in both halves of the Empire.

The base metal coinage, which continued to be issued with a silvery surface down to the middle of the fourth century, is very complex, and its development can be no more than outlined. Diocletian retained a nominal 5 per cent silver alloy for a substantial coin of about 10.00 g, sometimes marked xxi (pl. 22.2, 32). This would be the approximate equivalent of five or six imperial *asses*, and is about the size of an old penny. It is often referred to conventionally as the '*folles*' but there is no ancient authority for this. It bears a laurelled head, the radiate effigy being kept for a piece of 4.00 g, but devoid of silver. It was short-lived, and may have been worth as little as one-tenth of the larger denomination. The fate of the older radiates is uncertain, but immediate devaluation and subsequent demonetization is probable. Values in terms of *denarii* of account are known, but inflation was still in full swing, and the *folles* might have started with a value of fifty and the radiate at five *denarii* as suggested for the latter by the Aphrodisias inscription. The latter shows that even within Diocletian's reign substantial revaluation of the more important denominations took place, no doubt as inflation rendered official tariffs impossible to sustain. Later rulers reverted to the earlier practice of debasing the coin, though revaluations must have continued. By 318 the *folles* had fallen to a piece of 3.5 g, with a silver content of little more than 1 per cent, worth metallically no more than a twentieth of the Diocletianic coin, though probably tarified at many hundreds of *denarii*.

A reform in 318 was based on the correspondingly debased Diocletianic silver piece. This should have been tarified at about five times the value of the *folles* of 296, and the maintenance of this differential in Constantine's dominions is suggested by base (25 per cent silver) pieces of 310–311, contemporary with *folles* containing a theoretical $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent silver and weighing about 4.5 g. The *folles*, of whatever standard, seem to have co-existed happily; no doubt larger, finer issues were appropriately revalued. Now, all disappeared together, leaving only the new issues, perhaps called *centenionalis*, supplemented by considerable numbers of forgeries. The new currency period lasted for thirty years, with several reductions of weight and/or silver content. A complex reform in 348 created a three-denomination system, with coins varying in weight, fineness and type based on a *pecunia maiorina* of 5.2 g and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent silver. It was ruined by civil war and massive forgery, and in 354 Constantius II seems to have recognized that the day of the base billon coin was over. Apart from a

brief revival under Julian, base metal coins were from now on made exclusively in a copper alloy, though they were so over-valued that it paid forgers to overstrike the old demonetized billon coins with false dies, rather than extract the silver. After Constantius II, every emperor seems to have had his own ideas as to what denominations were required. Other than Julian's 8.25 g coin containing 3 per cent silver, only modest coppers not exceeding about 5.2 g were struck (pl. 22.2, 33). By the end of the fourth century, coins in excess of 2.5 g were unusual, and the vast majority of fifth-century pieces were little 'nummi' weighing about 1.25 g, and valued at around 7000 to the *solidus* (pl. 22.2, 34). Such coinage continued in the east down to its total reform by Anastasius. In the west, it largely died out towards the end of the reign of Valentinian III, and was only sporadic thereafter. The movement towards the revival of larger coins operated in the west, too, where Rome under the Ostrogoths produced archaizing pieces of forty nummi in the name of Zeno.

Coins of the fourth century are with few exceptions neatly and competently made, in low relief, but well modelled. On the whole, the base metal coins are much smaller than early imperial pieces, though until the 350s their silver component must have given them an enhanced purchasing power, comparable at least with *dupondii* and *asses*. After 400, style and technique decline. Gold and silver pieces remain competent, though increasingly crude. Coppers, especially in the west, sink to a very low standard, and the student is often baffled by the large proportion of more or less illegible pieces. In Valentinian III's later years, his coppers cease to be fully literate (pl. 22.2, 34), and after about 460, eastern pieces show the same defect. Anastasius revived literacy at his reform, but seems to have been totally indifferent to the artistry of his money, an unfortunate characteristic that was to persist through much of the Byzantine coinage.

After a brief transition, the reform of Diocletian imparted to the coinage completely new concepts of typology. The image of the ruler underwent a total rethink. Instead of a 'realistic' portrait, a symbolic effigy was displayed with ever-decreasing emphasis on personal characteristics. Under the Tetrarchy, ruthlessness is the impression mainly conveyed, but Constantine I and his successors preferred to stress their aloof, quasi-divine position. To the end, the western emperors maintained, at least on their *solidi*, a vestigial distinction between sovereigns who were old, young, stout or lean; but in the east the effigy became totally stereotyped soon after 400, and did duty for all emperors of whatever age or size, a single bust even coming to serve for a pair of joint rulers. Obverse inscriptions rapidly became disappointingly terse and uninformative. After 350 there were few

legends that differed significantly from the banal D(ominus) N(oster) CONSTANTIVS (for example) P(ius, later -erpetuus) F(elix) AVG(ustus). Reverses, too, underwent a profound change. In the first place, it was now usual for contemporary issues at all mints under a single emperor to exhibit the same types. Such concord sometimes even extended to mints in east and west alike. Typology was little related to early imperial practice, and strictly topical reverses, such as those of Aries celebrating the arrival of the mint from Ostia, are very seldom seen. Pagan gods disappeared in the west in 318, in the east in 324; their place was filled by an already well established, but limited range of symbolic types, complemented by an appropriate inscription. The old-style personification, defined by its accompanying legend, appears in a very restricted manner, such as VICTORIA AVG, with a figure of Victory. Victory, almost the sole survivor of her class, though as common as ever, is more characteristically linked with such legends as SECVRITAS OR SALVS REI PVBLICAE (pl. 22.2, 33). The emperor is no longer defined on the reverse by additional titles; rather, he is GLORIA ROMANORVM, RESTITVTOR or SPES REI PVBLICAE. His *vota*, the quinquennial expressions of loyalty, play an increasingly prominent role. Roma herself is as likely to be accompanied by VIRTVS ROMANORVM (pl. 22.2, 31) or CONCORDIA AVGGG as to be specifically named. The language of late Roman coins is thus limited, but allusive rather than descriptive. Its expressions are closely related to the extravagance of acclamation; the emperor as guarantor of *Salus Rei Publicae*, for example, goes back at least to Vespasian. With the fifth century comes the start of immobilization of types. Immobilization was never quite complete, but the drastic restriction of theme and treatment testifies to the limited interest of the later Romans in their coin-types.

The organization inherited from the third century continued at first without change. The reform of Diocletian involved the creation or relocation of some mints, the maintenance of others. All indicated their identity by the minimum number of letters; generally just initials e.g., R = Rome, L = Lyon, T = Ticinum (Pavia), S = Siscia, etc. Ambiguities were recognized and resolved, by the junior foundation expanding its signature e.g., LON = London, TR = Trier, SD = Serdica. Three mints began with the letter A; Antioch, the senior, used A for its gold, but ANT for billon, in distinction from AQ = Aquileia and ALE = Alexandria. In the course of the fourth century, mint-marks became ever more explicit, with elaborate series-marks (e.g. pl. 22.2, 33). During the fifth century, the mints of the western Empire rapidly fell away; Rome is the only significant producer of bronze after 420. In the east however, Heraclea is the only mint to

disappear during the fifth century, and the late imperial system did not break down until the seventh century.

Down to 365–6, all coinage was produced at the ordinary public mints, though the peripatetic character of the imperial courts led inevitably to coinage in the precious metals tending to move from mint to mint with the court. Complaints about the corruption of the officials who brought coin to the Treasury from the provinces, and, it might have been added, evidence that the moneyers were surreptitiously adulterating the gold coin, led Valentinian I and Valens to concentrate the minting of gold, and probably silver, too, in a special mobile Treasury department, and to accept gold from the provinces only in the form of refined bars. These reforms led to the placing of the letters OB (*obryzum* = refined gold) and PS (*pusulatum* = refined silver) on coins made under this system. It is fortunate that after a brief period of anonymity, it was decided to reinstate the name of the appropriate city (pl. 22.2, 29). But far into the Byzantine period the *moneta auri* in a capital city such as Constantinople with its Treasury staff, remained quite separate from the *monetapublica* with its hereditary and semi-servile workers.

It has often been said that the Roman Empire ‘fell’ in a limited sense only, and the coinage well illustrates this theme. Imitative coins in the name of Honorius and even bearing the putative mint-mark of Ravenna, were being produced by the Visigoths in south-western Gaul in the emperor’s own life-time. When at length the Roman army of Italy turned itself into a kingdom in 476 and the last western emperor died in 480, there remained the eastern emperor as an acceptable symbol of unity. Gold coinage was in his name alone well into the sixth century, and only as the fifth drew to its close did Vandals, Goths and Burgundians venture to place their names on the silver and bronze. The Roman Empire indeed lived on in its coins, and in the shilling and penny, Germanic translations of *solidus* and *denarius*, can be said not to be quite extinct yet.



22.1 Coins of the Republic and Empire discussed in the text (pp. 568–74)



22.2 Coins of the Empire discussed in the text (pp. 574–83)

· INDUSTRIAL · GROWTH ·

W. H. Manning

In modern usage there is a clear distinction between craft and industry. Industry implies the mechanical mass production of a limited range of standardized products, often by semi-skilled workmen, whereas a craft involves the individual production of a range of related goods by a skilled worker using relatively few mechanical aids. In the Roman world there was no such distinction and industry in the modern sense scarcely existed, the nearest approach to it being concentrations of workshops, some of which might employ several score of workmen, producing very similar goods; and it is in this rather loose sense that the term is used in this chapter.

The Roman Empire was not a monolithic unit with a uniform culture. It had been formed by the fusion of many states and tribes with cultural heritages of great diversity. Those in the eastern Mediterranean had a long and complex history which had culminated in the relative cultural unity of the hellenistic period. In matters of craft and technology Rome had little to teach and much to learn from them. What the Roman government was able to do, however, was to bring prolonged peace and a reasonably just administration which resulted in a considerable rise in both private and public wealth, as well as a more *laissez faire* approach to economic matters which led to the ending of most of the royal monopolies of the hellenistic kingdoms. It would be difficult to argue that the great prosperity of this area, which reached its apogee in the late first and second centuries AD, did not find its reflection in a corresponding growth in the crafts and trades which together formed ancient industry. The lavish expenditure on public works alone would have given employment to thousands of craftsmen and put very large sums of money into circulation within the cities. Under such

conditions the industries which serviced these communities flourished in a way rarely seen before; for while there had been periods of prosperity in earlier centuries they had tended to be more localized whereas now a whole range of provinces benefitted.

The normal form of industry in these areas, and in Italy and the older Graeco-Roman areas of the western Mediterranean, was very uniform. The basic units were almost all small; even the largest factories rarely employed more than a few score of men, and their main, indeed usually their only, market was the local one. The more necessary an article was for the life of the masses the greater would be the demand for it and the higher the likelihood that it would be made locally; thus clothing was normally produced in the home, and every village might have a baker, blacksmith and potter. On the other hand it would have been necessary for the villager to have to go to town or to a fair, or be visited by a peddler, if he wanted something which was less basic. But a large city, and there were many around the Mediterranean, would have supported almost all the industries needed to satisfy its own requirements, although much of the raw materials must have been imported. The manufactured goods imported into these cities, and through them into the smaller communities around them, varied considerably and were by no means confined to the more luxurious items. No doubt all the usual factors of reputation, prestige and simple snobbery were involved in determining why imported goods were preferred to essentially similar ones produced locally, but to obtain a share of this market was one of the few ways in which an industry could hope to expand beyond its local area, although in fact few actually did so. In reality many of the factors which made such an expansion possible were outside the control of the producers themselves, most notably, perhaps, their position on the existing trade networks, and in particular on those carrying the agricultural produce which formed the major part of all ancient long distance trade. For most industries, even in the wealthier provinces, when expansion came it was as a consequence of the rising prosperity of the early Empire which meant that more people could afford to buy more of their products. When growth occurred in an industry it appears to have taken the form of an increase in the numbers of productive units rather than a substantial enlargement of individual firms. Very large industrial concerns were extremely rare in the Roman world.

By contrast the history and culture of the European provinces were quite different. If Rome could bring little that was new in the manufacturing field to the hellenistic world she had much to offer the peoples of western Europe. Technologically Rome was not a great deal more advanced than

many of the native cultures of those areas, although the tendency was for the general level of technology to fall as one moved farther from the Mediterranean. Britain, in particular, was surprisingly retarded in some ways; the potter's wheel had only been introduced at the end of the first century BC although it had been in use in Gaul for the previous four centuries, and the potter's kiln had arrived even later. Similarly the shaft furnace used in the classical world for the smelting of metals, first appeared in Britain at about the time of the Roman conquest. But in other crafts, such as fine metalworking which were related to the requirements of aristocratic patrons, the native craftsmen were quite as competent as their Roman counterparts.

With the incorporation of these areas into the Empire there came a series of fundamentally important changes. Some were certainly technological, but upon the whole these were probably the least significant, and many of the more important operated on industry indirectly. First there was the *pax Romana*, not universal and not unbroken, but sufficiently so to convert a normal condition of war into one of peace; the consequences of this alone on the pattern of trade and the growth of population and markets will have been profound. Similarly what had been a series of divided tribes were now united into single provinces, a fact which over a period of time must have destroyed many of the older cultural barriers to the movement of goods and craftsmen. Although large areas of Iron Age Europe had shared a basically common culture they were divided politically into a large number of independent tribes often at war with their neighbours. Their economies were basically agricultural, and although crafts flourished many were geared to the demands of the tribal aristocracies rather than any larger market. Most of the population lived in the countryside and such concentrations as occurred in the hillforts and *oppida* were small by comparison with the great cities of the Mediterranean world, and the markets which they created will have been correspondingly small. All of the more advanced areas, including the south of Britain, had developed some form of monetary economy, but in many areas this did not involve the widespread use of low value copper coins and without them the system was incapable of coping with the small transactions of everyday life. The introduction of the Roman monetary system ([Chapter 22](#)) which had a graduated coinage suitable for almost every transaction, will have had a revolutionary effect on the economy, the more so as it appeared together with a developed, if by our standards primitive, banking system with facilities for loans. Finally, the acceptance of all of this was no doubt encouraged by the imposition of the elaborate system of Roman taxation.

The rapid development of an extensive network of roads, particularly necessary for the short distance movement of raw materials and manufactured goods, will have been of great importance, and it is probable that the facilities for river traffic will also have been improved ([Chapter 26](#)). Finally it should not be forgotten that the Roman government deliberately encouraged the romanization of the tribal aristocracies, as Tacitus' life of Agricola makes clear. The acceptance of such a concept would have involved not only wearing a *toga* and taking baths, but of an appreciation of the advantages of urban life, and of the idea that it was the duty of the wealthy citizens of a city or state to contribute to the public good by spending part of their fortune on public works. Taken together these various factors totally changed the economic face of western Europe in a remarkably short time. In particular they led to the appearance of true cities which will have provided the markets necessary for the development and growth of industry.

As observed above, the normal pattern of trade and industry was one of local needs being satisfied by local production, and any city, together with the area around it, will have provided the market necessary for the development of industry. In the main these industries were concerned with the basic necessities of life, such as the processing of food, including milling and baking; the production of clothing, weaving, fulling and dyeing, and the tanning and working of leather; the manufacture of domestic utensils, equipment and tools, potters, and smiths working with silver, copper alloys and iron; and all of those many trades which formed the building industry, limeburners, brickmakers, plumbers, carpenters and so forth. In those provinces which had a long history of urban life, particularly in the eastern Empire, such industries already existed, and their growth probably did little more than reflect the increasing population and wealth of the earlier centuries of the imperial period, but in most of the western provinces many were new introductions. In Britain, northern Gaul and Germany, as well as in most of the Danube provinces there was little or no tradition of building in stone or brick and much of the construction industry will have been a fresh development, while many existing industries, such as the pottery industry in Britain, saw a massive expansion to cope with the new demand.

It was probably in the interim period between the development of a taste for romanized products but before the local industries had developed the capacity to satisfy it, that the established producers in the older provinces had their greatest chance to establish export markets. The industries which were best placed to take advantage of this were those in adjacent provinces,

or if more distant, those able to move their products to the new markets by water. The products most likely to achieve a firm place in those markets were mainly in the middle price range, glass, fine pottery, copper-alloy vessels and other metalwork, and fine cloth. Coarse pottery, iron tools and other cheap goods were usually produced locally, although in some cases, such as pottery lamps, foreign exporters were sometimes able to obtain a share of the market. Inevitably the success of these imports led to local imitations, as happened in Britain with the glass industry which had a firm but scarcely distinguished place in the local economy, and with samian ware which totally failed to establish itself.

Although the cities were largely self-sufficient the Roman world contained one major group for which this was only partially true, namely the army. When the vast area of the Empire is considered, the size of its army was surprisingly small, perhaps some 350,000 men in the second century AD. Its economic effect, however, was considerable, partly because it was not distributed evenly through all the provinces but concentrated in a few key ones, usually near the frontiers. A Roman legionary fortress with its associated settlement formed a substantial market, and while most of its basic requirements will have been satisfied by the industries which grew up around it, it was still a huge potential market for exporting industries. Much of the basic military equipment was supplied by the state either from its own factories or by bulk purchase, although the soldier probably had to pay for it, but other equipment of a more personal nature may have been left to individual choice. Obtaining a state contract must have been the making of many firms in the Roman world; indeed it may have been sufficient to have established some provincial industries which had the advantage of being closer to the military bases than were the older industries of Italy. This factor will have applied most fully in the western provinces where the armies lay on the frontiers far from the Mediterranean; in the east they were more often associated with existing cities which could supply their needs. In the west too, most of the fortresses were situated on navigable rivers; a policy probably intended to make provisioning easier but a great bonus for any industry wishing to break into the military market or gain a military contract. One result was that some of the contractors were surprisingly far from the armies which they supplied. Thus much of the coarse pottery used on Hadrian's Wall came over four hundred miles by sea from southern Dorset, an arrangement which led to substantial growth in the pottery industry there.

The question which arises is why were some industries able to build up a considerable export market while others, producing very similar goods,

failed to do so? To find the answer attention must be turned to what was undoubtedly the largest of all the productive industries of antiquity, namely agriculture. Not only did this employ the vast majority of the working population and absorb the major part of all investment, but it was one of the few areas of commerce which was socially acceptable to the Roman patrician and probably by custom and imitation to many of the native provincial aristocracies as well, in whose hands the greater part of the wealth of the ancient world was concentrated. Partly because agriculture was a suitable occupation for a gentleman there existed a large body of specialist literature which leaves little doubt that the Roman agriculturalist regarded farming as a commercial enterprise. Indeed no nineteenth-century industrialist could have expressed a harsher view of the need to obtain a sufficient return on investment than Cato. The impression given by the literature is fully confirmed by the archaeological evidence. The facilities of the Boscoreale villa near Pompeii (fig. 23.1), which perished in the eruption of AD 79, included storage vats for 104,550 l (23,000 gal.) of wine and 18,180 l (4,000 gal.) of olive oil. This villa cannot have been the centre of a very large estate, for land prices on the lower slopes of Vesuvius were probably too valuable for that, but it is known that elsewhere in Italy and in many of the other provinces there existed *latifundia*, great estates run as productive units, where the facilities for processing the produce will have been on a correspondingly large scale.

The great cities of the Roman world had an almost insatiable appetite for the basic agricultural products of their time: grain, olive oil and wine. In many cases the quantities needed were so great that they could not be provided locally and had to be brought from distant sources along well-defined trade routes. A study of the inscriptions left by the *mercatores* and *negotiatores* who handled the bulk trade of the Empire makes it clear that most were concerned with foodstuffs, metals and timber, cloth and pottery. The Mediterranean in particular was criss-crossed by sea routes along which grain, oil and wine were carried from the producing countries - Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain

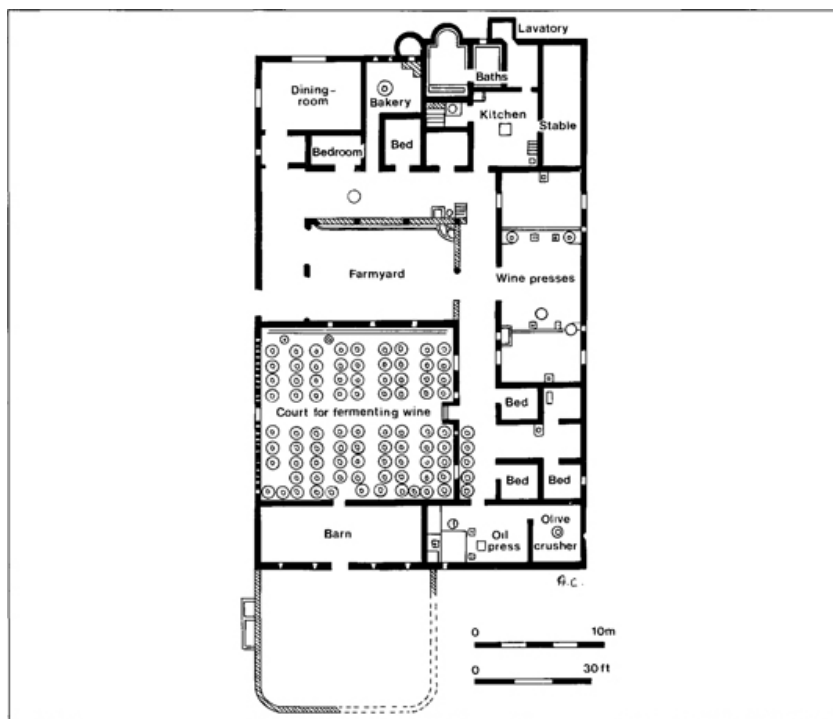


Figure 23.1 Plan of the villa at Boscoreale (*after Grant*)

and Gaul - to the consuming cities, and above all to Rome. This is not the point for a detailed discussion of this commerce ([Chapter 25](#)) but there is no doubt that it dominated Roman trading patterns and that all other forms of long distance commerce were of minor importance by comparison ([Chapter 26](#)). Lucian, on seeing one of the great grain freighters which plied between Alexandria and Italy, in the harbour of Athens, where it had been driven by storms, was told that it carried enough grain to feed the whole of that city for a year; and although this was a considerable exaggeration, the dimensions which he gives for it indicate that it could have carried over a thousand tons of grain. Such ships carried the exports of Egypt as supercargo, and although Strabo noted that they carried little on their return journey from Pozzuoli, this is a comparative statement, for all the workshops of Capua would not have produced sufficient bronze vessels to have filled one such freighter let alone a fleet of them. The Alexandria to Pozzuoli or Ostia route may have been the most important but it was unique only in the volume of trade which it carried, and almost all of the major maritime cities of the Mediterranean were either exporters or importers of foodstuffs, often on a very considerable scale. The existence

of this traffic offered an immense advantage to the manufacturers of the ports involved for products which would never have formed a viable cargo on their own could be carried as supercargo by vessels laden with grain or oil. Other prime exports which probably formed a base on which small industries could build their own export trade included metals and timber. It is noticeable, for example, that the celebrated fish-sauce (*garum*) industry of Cartagena exported its dubious product through the port which handled the output of one of the largest and richest of all the Spanish mining areas.

An industry which had to rely on overland transport for the movement of its products, even for quite short distances, was placed at an immense disadvantage by the very high cost of such transport. All transport was relatively expensive, but road transport was easily the most expensive of all, and sea transport the cheapest. Cato, writing in the mid-second century BC, gives two examples which make the cost of moving heavy goods overland very clear. The first concerns the transport of an olive press bought at Suessa, some 40 km (25 miles) from his estate, for a total of 425 *sesterces*. Fetching it, however, took an ox-cart and six men, with six boys to drive the oxen, no less than six days, at a cost of 72 *sesterces*, or some 17 per cent of the original price of the mill. Another press, bought this time at Pompeii 120 km (75 miles) from his estate, for 384 *sesterces* cost no less than 280 *sesterces*, or 73 per cent of its initial cost, to transport to his farm. There is no information on the cost of sea transport at this time but Diocletian's Price Edict of AD 301 provides figures for both sea and land transport. Using these, and the calculations of A. H. M. Jones and R. Duncan-Jones, the haulage of a 550 kg (1,200 lb) waggon load of wheat cost 20 *denarii* per Roman mile, which, if the price of wheat quoted in the Edict is used would have increased its final cost by about 33 per cent for every 100 Roman miles it was carried. By contrast the cost of moving the same load of grain the 1,250 miles from Alexandria to Rome was 960 *denarii* or 76.8 *denarii* per 100 Roman miles which would raise the cost of the grain by 1.3 per cent for every 100 Roman miles it was carried. This figure might be thought abnormally low, and may indeed reflect the great size of the freighters used on that particular run, but other prices quoted for sea carriage, such as 72 *denarii* for transporting a similar quantity of grain from Alexandria to Byzantium, or 1560 *denarii* from Syria to Lusitania are not much higher. River transport, which was of great importance in the Roman world, is not mentioned in the Edict but Duncan-Jones quotes figures from Egypt in the first century AD which give an increase of c. 6.4 per cent per 100 Roman miles, making it more expensive than sea transport but less than one-fifth of the comparable charge for carriage in an ox-

waggon. None of these figures should be taken too literally; they must have varied with the nature of the goods, the type of voyage and the period, but the general relative costs are valid and make the advantages of carriage by water quite obvious.

This is almost certainly one of the reasons why the Roman army so often sited its major bases on navigable rivers such as the Rhine and Danube, and it is noticeable that many of the great cities of the Empire lay by the sea: Alexandria, Caesarea, Tyre, Sidon, Ephesus, Carthage, Syracuse, Pozzuoli, Cartagena, Cadiz, Narbonne, and Marseilles, while many others stood on navigable rivers which gave direct access to the sea and were capable of receiving sea-going vessels: Antioch, Cologne, Lyon, Aries and London all being obvious examples. Still more lay only a few short miles from the coast, as with Pergamum and Rome itself, which had the advantage of having a river capable of carrying barges if not larger vessels from its port at Ostia. Not all of these developed a major exporting industry, Rome and Antioch, for example, remained essentially consumers rather than exporters, but many of the others did so, in some cases on a very large scale. When this was the case there can be little doubt that one of the key factors, probably often the key factor, was the relative cheapness with which raw materials could reach them and their products be shipped out. Indeed it is debatable whether an export trade in manufactured goods usually developed unless there was also a considerable trade in raw materials and in particular in agricultural produce. Clearly there were exceptions, especially among the luxury items, but as a generalization it is true and presumably indicates that the total trade in manufactured goods from any one area was rarely enough to generate a viable trading pattern of its own. The corollary is that certain cities became major exporters largely because they had access to water transport and were centres for the bulk movement of agricultural products, and that without adequate access to such transport industry was usually incapable of expanding beyond its local markets. But it would be unwise to assume that most of these exporting industries were of great size, or that their exports formed a dominant part of the economy of their area, for in most cases this is unlikely to have been the case. Rather the local market was the basis of their success and what was sold elsewhere was a desirable bonus. Obviously any such generalization is not universally true. The specialized pottery industries of Arretium and later of Gaul produced on a scale which must have made their local sales of minor importance, and the same was certainly true of the mining areas of the Empire, particularly of Spain, although here for rather different reasons.

The production of metals is probably the great exception to most of these generalizations, for, apart from iron which is a widely distributed metal, workable deposits of ores are found only in restricted areas. Although mining is discussed in detail elsewhere in this work ([Chapter 24](#)), it must be noted here that if agriculture is excepted, it was almost certainly the most concentrated and largest of all the industries of the ancient world. Strabo writing at the beginning of the first century AD, tells us that some 40,000 men were employed in the silver mines at Cartagena in Spain, and this was only one of several large mining areas in that province. Similarly the mining regulations from the Vipasca (Aljustrel) region of Portugal indicate a degree of organization which can only have applied to a massive industrial enterprise, although they also make it clear that the mines themselves were divided up among a number of lessees. In the Roman period, and for many centuries after, it was normal for the ores to be smelted as close as possible to the mine in order to reduce the weight to be transported. But smelting on a large scale requires equally large quantities of charcoal, the production of which is notoriously destructive of timber. In at least one case, the Island of Elba which was famous for its iron mines, the early exhaustion of the timber on the island itself necessitated transporting the ore to Populonia on the Italian mainland for smelting. The blooms produced at Populonia, aptly described by Diodorus as being ‘like large sponges’, were then taken by sea to the smiths of Pozzuoli from whence the finished tools and weapons were exported, in Diodorus’s words again, to ‘every port in the world’. In both cases the movement of the raw material was by sea, as was the export of the finished products; had Pozzuoli not been a major port this export industry would probably not have existed.

Quarrying, although allied to mining in its techniques, was generally a far more localized industry. Where suitable stone was easily available it was used, but it is heavy and the cost of haulage was high even when it could be moved by water, which limited the distances it was carried. But there were factors which overrode this simple economic principle, in particular the desire for private and public display which demanded that important buildings should be constructed of stone and decorated with fine stone veneers and sculpture ([pl. 23.4](#)); the more exotic the stone, the more prestige it carried. The result was that certain desirable and fashionable stones were quarried on an enormous scale and moved over great distances. Even the *basilica* of such a minor provincial town as Silchester could boast veneers not only of Purbeck marble but also of Italian and Pyrenean marble. But while no doubt a source of local pride this achievement

becomes insignificant when compared with the feats of conspicuous display seen in some of the Mediterranean cities, and in particular in Rome itself. To quote a single example, the sixteen columns of the porch of the Pantheon, each weighing about sixty tons, came from Egypt, and these were by no means the largest blocks produced by the quarries of that country in the Roman period (pl. 23.4). Feats such as this may have been immensely impressive but they contributed little to the real growth of the stone-working industries which was brought about by the thousands of more modest buildings which required stone for their fabric and decoration. When it is remembered that in most of the western provinces there was no pre-Roman tradition of building in mortared stone, then the great expansion of these industries becomes obvious. Quarries which were either on the sea, as at Thasos and Proconnesus, or were close to it as in Thessaly or on the Isle of Purbeck, were much appreciated as they reduced the distance that the stone had to be hauled overland; but if the stone was desirable enough it was likely to be quarried no matter where it was found. Most of the quarries producing the finer stones were imperial property but many others were private enterprises. In either case their products were usually exported in standardized blocks, as ready-cut veneers or roughed-out sculpture, all intended to reduce the cost of transport by eliminating unnecessary weight. This is the reason for the unfinished sarcophagi which are found in areas far from the source of their stone. The quarryman, the mason and the sculptor had all been important trades before the Roman period but their expansion under the Empire was dramatic, especially in the first few centuries of the Christian era when costly and magnificent buildings became a matter of civic pride, and decorative sculpture and statuary were used on a scale unparalleled before. The sheer quantity of marble statuary which still survives from this period shows that its production was an industry, even if the individual workshops were probably relatively small.

As the mining of metals was controlled by the distribution of the ores rather than of the markets, it is not surprising that large-scale manufacturing industries were not sited near the mines themselves. Instead the smelted metals were taken to the industries. All cities appear to have received the metals necessary for their local requirements, but large-scale metal-working industries tended to develop in certain favoured areas which had good access both to the raw materials and the markets. Two examples may suffice to make this point. In the late Republic and early Empire the most important area for the manufacture of copper alloy vessels was Capua. The scale of this industry may be debated but the wide distribution of its products shows its success. Capua lay only a relatively short distance

from what was then the greatest of the Italian ports, Pozzuoli, itself a major centre for the production of iron tools and implements, as mentioned above. In both cases there can be no doubt that it was accessibility to sea transport, for bringing in the raw materials and carrying away the finished goods, which was the key to their success in more distant markets, and that this success was firmly based on the large local market of Campania which was one of the wealthiest and most populous regions of Italy. The second example comes from the north-east of Italy. The city of Aquileia lies at the head of the Adriatic where the roads across the mountains from Noricum reached the sea. In imperial times it became one of the major industrial centres of Italy with much of its industry dependent on iron from the mines of Noricum less than 160 km (100 miles) north. Norican iron was regarded as second only to the legendary Seric iron, which was actually pure steel and imported at great expense from India, and it too was a form of steel. Nor was iron the only metal worked at Aquileia for at the other end of the scale the city was famous for its silver ware, as well as having an important and flourishing glass industry, both catering for the export market to the Danubian provinces.

Metalwork in general was among the most widely traded of manufactured products, although with the exception of a few unusual areas such as Elba and Noricum, iron was probably too widely found to be carried very far. For other metals Spain was the *El Dorado* of the Roman period, producing gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and iron in great quantities. An appreciable amount no doubt was used in that province but the greater part was exported to provide the raw materials for the metal industries of the western Mediterranean area and even further afield. The success of Capua and other cities in Campania in producing copper alloy vessels is well known, but the same area was probably equally successful in the production of silver ware. Hoards such as those from the Boscoreale villa or the House of the Menander in Pompeii, both containing over one hundred pieces, show how widely silver plate was in use among the upper middle classes of the period. Syria, Alexandria and Italy were especially famous for their silver ware, but all major cities will have had their silver-smiths. The production of silver plate is one of the few areas where there is reasonably firm evidence for the development of the factory system. Most pieces no doubt, were produced in small workshops, probably often using material provided by the customer himself, but casual comments by Pliny the Elder and inscriptions from Rome, which was a centre of silver-smithing, suggest that the larger scale, a factory system was not uncommon, with skilled craftsmen specializing in particular aspects of the

work. Thus men are found, usually either freedmen or slaves, who are referred to as casters, embossers, engravers, gilders and polishers, suggesting a degree of specialization more consistent with the factory system than the small workshop (pl. 23.5). And what applied to silver plate must have applied with equal force to the bronze industry.

Another industry which has left sufficient traces to make some comments on its structure and growth was that producing fine pottery. The knowledge of it is based mainly on archaeological evidence and is probably fullest for the red-gloss wares produced from the Augustan period onwards, first in Italy at Arrezzo (Arretium) and then successively in southern, central and eastern Gaul. The sheer quantity of this pottery found throughout the Roman world and far beyond it indicates the success of these industries but says relatively little about their structure. The location of the production sites was partly controlled by sources of suitable clays, but Arrezzo had been a major industrial centre for centuries before this industry became important (pl. 23.6). Other parts of Italy, including Pozzuoli, produced essentially similar wares, and the arretine products were not inherently better than their rivals, some of which were exported in considerable quantities. However, the success of the arretine industry was on such an immense scale as to suggest that it owed much of that success to its production and marketing techniques. The industry seems to have been divided among a number of separate firms usually owned by Roman citizens, apparently commonly of servile origin, with the work being done by slaves. The largest number known are the fifty-eight of P. Cornelius; but these are the named men who worked on the actual production of the pots and they must have been supported by a large number of anonymous slaves who did the more menial tasks, such as preparing the clay or stoking the furnaces. If allowance is made for them the larger producers may have employed upwards of one hundred people, although the average establishment was probably smaller. Within each firm there were specialists producing the moulds in which the pots were made, the *poincons* with which these moulds were decorated, and the pots themselves. Although arretine was probably the largest of the Italian pottery exporting industries it was not the only one. The potters aco and sarius working in northern Italy under Augustus were exporting fine beakers and bowls, aco also began production at Lyon in Gaul, where pottery very similar to that produced at Arrezzo was made early in the Augustan period. Whether this reflects the founding of branches by the main arretine firms, or an attempt to found a rival industry using craftsmen from Arrezzo cannot be decided, but clearly the reason was the increasing importance of the Gallic market. The great

intrinsic wealth of Gaul was becoming increasingly obvious as the first century BC drew to its close, and its attractiveness as a market was made even greater by the large army active in Germany as Augustus' plans for the conquest of that country progressed. The choice of Lyon for these industries was logical and indicates what the Roman entrepreneur regarded as the main requirements for the creation of a successful new industry - excellent communications by road, access to most parts of Gaul and the Mediterranean by water, and a sound home market provided by the rapidly growing capital of Gallia Lugudunensis, which was soon to become the richest city in all of Gaul. If, as seems highly probable, this marks a deliberate attempt by arretine manufacturers, who were then hardly threatened by any competition, to establish branches closer to their developing markets, it indicates a dynamic approach which suggests that the decline later seen in the arretine industry, and many others in Italy, may be as much the result of their own success in establishing branches as a simple failure to adjust to provincial competition. In saying this a concerted effort by 'the arretine industry' must not be envisaged. Such industries consisted of many firms, some of which were expansionist no doubt, while others were not. The survivors were those who were the most dynamic and adapted most rapidly to changing circumstances. Lyon itself turned out to be but a short and passing phase in the development of the Gallic samian-ware industry, but it was a significant one. More successful was the industry producing fine cups and beakers which retained an important share of the markets of Gaul, Germany and Britain until late in the first century AD.

A somewhat similar situation appears to be detectable in the glass industry. In the hellenistic period the main production centres had been on the Syrian coast and in Egypt, particularly at Alexandria. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the industry being in those areas was the availability of the fine sand and natron, or alternatively plant ash, necessary for the production of the glass, but probably more important was the fact that they were also the largest markets in the hellenistic world. Until the end of the first millennium BC almost all glass vessels were produced either by dipping a core into molten glass, by casting, or by fusing multicoloured rods to form the highly prized mosaic glass; all time-consuming and relatively expensive techniques. In the first century BC however, a complete revolution took place in the industry which led to its rapid expansion both in the areas of production and in the quantity produced. The cause of this was the invention of glass-blowing by Syrian workers, a method of production which so increased the speed with which glass

vessels could be made as dramatically to reduce their cost. Overnight what had been a product for the luxury market became available to all, and the only problem in building up a mass market was that the cost of transporting the fragile product might make its price too high. In the event this was largely overcome by the producers moving closer to their markets, and in particular to Italy. Such a movement was no new thing. It must have been the method by which the Alexandrian industry had itself been founded, and as the Italian market had grown some Alexandrian workmen or firms had already moved to Campania and Rome, probably in the first century BC. The Campanian industry was fortunate in having suitable sand available on the coast, but it can scarcely be a coincidence that it was established close to the port of Pozzuoli with its excellent communications both with the east and with the largest of all markets, Rome itself. The introduction of the technique of glassblowing into the western provinces appears to have been the work of Syrian craftsmen who established workshops initially in northern Italy, where a small industry already existed, and then in Gaul, once again probably at Lyon. Subsequently glass houses appeared in all of the newer provinces, including Britain, although in most cases the finer pieces appear to have remained a monopoly of a limited number of specialized centres. The northern markets came to be dominated by the huge industry centred on Cologne, which continued to produce on a considerable scale throughout the Roman period, having the immense advantage of being on one of the greatest navigable rivers in Europe with direct access to the sea. Another major centre was at Aquileia, no doubt producing as much for the Danube provinces as for Italy and the Adriatic region.

The expansion of the glass industry is particularly well documented, but it is probable that the process by which it and the fine pottery industries grew, namely by the movement of workmen closer to the new markets created by the initial success of their products, was the normal one by which such industries developed in the Roman world. Such expansion will have been particularly characteristic of the western provinces where industries on this scale had not existed before their incorporation in the Empire, and where there was often a marked difference on the levels of technology between the native cultures and that of the Roman world. In the eastern provinces the basic development had occurred during the hellenistic period if not before, and while the industries may have expanded in the favourable climate provided by the early Empire it was from a well established foundation. In some cases the existence of developed industries may even have retarded the adoption of new ideas. Thus the glass industry

in Egypt failed to introduce the mass-production of blown glass until the second century AD, by which time the technique was in use throughout the rest of the Empire.

Without question one of the largest and most labour intensive of all ancient industries was that producing cloth (pl. 23.5). The evidence of spindle-whorls, loom-weights and the like makes it clear that spinning and weaving were practised on a large scale throughout the Empire, and it need not be doubted that local needs were satisfied locally

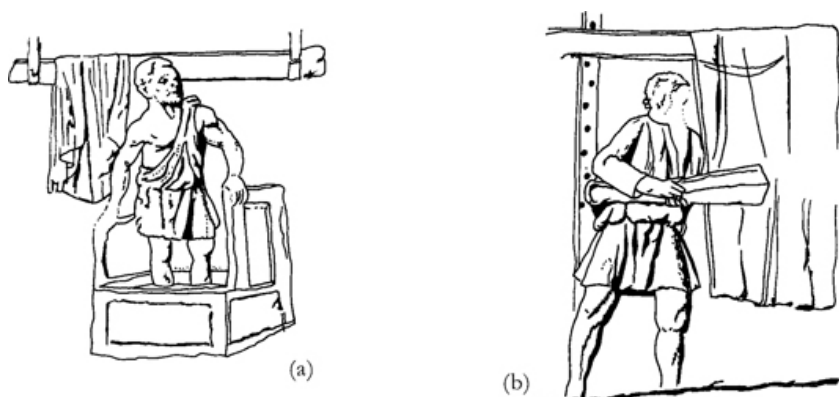


Figure 23.2 (a) Tombstone from Sens, France, showing a fuller at work; (b) tombstone from Sens, France, illustrating the use of cropping shears for trimming the knap (after J. P. Wild)

and that only exceptionally was either the cloth or finished clothing transported for any distance (fig. 23.2). But, while the rural areas and smaller, agriculturally-dependent settlements may have been self-sufficient, the greater cities were not and will have provided large and profitable markets for the producers of suitable cloths. Even in those areas which were largely self-sufficient there will have been a market for the finer and more luxurious cloths. Certain centres had a high reputation for such fabrics; Sicily and Malta were two, but most were in the eastern provinces where both woollen and linen cloths were produced in great quantities. At Hierapolis in western Turkey, where the local spring water is particularly suitable for the processing and dyeing of cloth, we find references to woolwashers, woolworkers, fullers and dyers, but not to spinners, and to weavers only of special fabrics; a fact which tends to confirm the evidence from other areas that the spinning and weaving of the common fabrics was a domestic industry. The trade in cloth and clothing is most fully illustrated by Diocletian's Price Edict where they form a group second in size only to

foodstuffs. Clothing is listed from all over the Empire, including the oft quoted *birrus Britannicus*, although in some cases it may be suspected that the regional name refers to the area from which the type originated rather than its sole place of manufacture in AD 301. The largest groups of cloth came from the east and the names of Scythopolis, Tarsus, Byblus and Laodiceia occur with monotonous regularity. Nor were all their products intended for the luxury market; many types are quoted in three distinct grades and priced accordingly. The evidence from Egypt, thanks to the survival of so many papyri, is a great deal fuller than for other provinces. There linen rather than wool was the staple product and there are references to guilds of weavers in various cities. Under the Ptolemies almost all industry in Egypt had been a state monopoly, but the Roman government preferred to encourage private enterprise and linen-weaving, along with glass-making and the manufacture of papyrus, became one of the major exporting industries of the Roman period. Within the industry various districts specialized in different weaves, and many are known by the name of the area from which the model was derived. Thus are recorded Spanish, Italic and Dalmatic garments, and Lodix, originally a speciality of Laodiceia, being woven at Arsinoe. Some of these fabrics, along with the other products of Egyptian industry, as well as goods imported into the country such as arretine pottery, were exported through the Red Sea ports to Arabia and India.

Pompeii is the city which provides the most complete view of a major cloth industry in action at the time of the eruption of AD 79. The reason for this development probably lay in the fact that, as Strabo noted, Pompeii was the port for the produce of the southern part of Campania and for some considerable distance inland. Other important exports from the city were wine, oil, fish-sauce, and millstones. Much, perhaps most, of the cloth will have arrived in the city along the river Sarno having been woven in the towns and mountains behind the city, where the flocks which produced it were pastured. Relatively little is likely to have come as raw wool although there is sufficient evidence to show that both spinning and weaving were done there, as in all Italian cities at that time. The major processes undertaken in Pompeii, however, were fulling and dyeing, particularly the former. The scale of this industry and its importance in the economic life of the city is shown by the large and splendid market building which was provided for the fullers on one side of the forum. No other trade had facilities of this type, but it is informative to contrast this building with the converted houses in which the fullers and dyers worked, with their tanks built into formerly elegant peristyles. Such establishments were typical of

the Roman world; small, individual units only became important in the mass, and the contrast between such workshops and the grandiose building in which their goods were sold is an effective symbol of their combined weight.

Baking was the only industry in Pompeii which surpassed fulling in size (pls 23.2 and 23.3). As was normal in the ancient world the Pompeian baker was also a miller and even today the bakeries are immediately recognizable by the large hour-glass shaped millstones and by the ovens. The number of these establishments and of the taverns, which were even more common, is a reminder that even in an exporting town most of the commerce was actually concerned with local needs. But if these were the major trades of Pompeii they were not the only ones and others are known from the remains of their workshops, and from inscriptions and graffiti, particularly those announcing that candidates for local offices had the support of one or another of the craft guilds. Trades known in the town include goldsmiths, gem engravers, bronze workers, blacksmiths, and tanners; while the well-known paintings showing cupids at work provide invaluable visual evidence of fullers, goldsmiths, perfumers, shoemakers and carpenters (pl. 23.5a and b). No doubt in most cases their products were sold directly to the public from the workshops which also served as showrooms, as was normal in the ancient world. This is the arrangement in the fine altar from Rome of the cutler L. Cornelius Atimetus where is seen on one face the smith and his assistant at work in the forge, and on the other the shop with the owner, who is in the process of selling a knife to a customer, standing in front of a rack laden with reaping hooks, chisels and knives (pl. 23.1a and b).

Although this information comes from one Campanian town it would have been equally applicable, no doubt with some local variations, to many thousands of others scattered throughout the Empire. Indeed a similar picture emerges from the papyri concerned with town life in Egypt. In the unimportant village of Tebtynis for example, an astonishing array of crafts - dyeing, fulling, wool-carding, weaving, garment-making, stone-working, cobbling, gold and bronze smithing, strigil-making, plumbing, tinsmithing, milling and baking, potting and brick making, carpentry, making arms and breastplates, are to be found, as well as a host of trades which were not industrial; few if any of this formidable list can have been concerned with anything other than local trade.

The election posters of Pompeii and inscriptions from throughout the Empire show that most of the crafts and industries of a city were united in a series of specialized *collegia*, membership of which appears to have been

restricted to the owners of firms. Most of the labour force of the industries of Italy and the more Italianized provinces were slaves, particularly in the early Empire, but it is clear that the abler ones might often hope for manumission and the opportunity to set up in business on their own. Roman society might frown on the patrician being involved in commerce, but there was no stigma attached to his acting as the financial backer and patron of his freedmen, and much, perhaps most, of Italian industry in the late Republic and early Empire was in the hands of freedmen or their descendants. In Asia Minor on the other hand the industrial workforce appears to have consisted largely of poor freemen, while in the Celtic areas, where slavery had played little part in pre-Roman society, most of the workers will also have been freemen.

The political, military and economic problems which beset the Roman world in the third century inevitably led to profound changes in its social and economic structure from which industry was not exempt. Volumes have been written on this subject, but all that needs to be said here is that by the fourth century the social structure of the Roman world had hardened, and that state intervention and control was on an ever-increasing scale. No doubt in practice many crafts had always been hereditary but this was now a legal requirement, with a considerable degree of state control being exercised through the existing trade *collegia*. At the same time there were attempts to control the prices of goods and services throughout the Empire, the best known being the price edict issued by Diocletian in AD 301. What effect these changes had on industry is not known; all the archaeological and much of the literary evidence suggests that most industries continued to flourish, and that it was only during barbarian invasions and civil wars that they suffered any real setbacks. The structure of Roman industry with its multitude of small units will have increased its resilience, as no doubt did the fact that most produced necessities rather than luxuries.

In two fields, however, the state became directly involved for it took control of the armaments works and certain weaving mills and dye-works. The Roman government had always been understandably concerned to ensure that its armies had an adequate supply of equipment, and as early as Cicero, he mentions the wealth made by a man in charge of arms factories during the Social War. Although firm evidence is largely lacking it appears that in the early Empire the government was content to ensure a supply of equipment by the use of contracts supplemented by some production by the army itself. Inevitably specialized armaments manufacturers tended to be concentrated in certain cities and it was probably by nationalizing them that the state armaments factories were created. In the eastern provinces there

were fifteen such factories, mainly producing shields and general arms, but including three specializing in the armour for heavy cavalry and one each for shields and lances. In the west there were more; five in Illyricum, six in Italy and nine in Gaul, a pattern which must reflect their earlier distribution and the current strategic requirements. Of these, six were general producers, one made breast plates, six made shields, two made swords, two made arrows, one made bows, and one made *ballistae*. In addition there were three factories in the west and two in the east making the elaborate armour worn by officers.

The workmen in these establishments were equated with soldiers, receiving the same rations and being branded like them to make recapture easier should they desert, although the evidence suggests that it was actually a popular employment. By contrast the state weaving mills were staffed with slaves. The details are known only of those in the western provinces where there were two linen mills and fourteen woollen mills, probably because linen had always been a speciality of the eastern provinces; of these the largest number was again in Gaul. There were also nine dye-works. The output of them all will have been intended for the army and other government services. How large these factories were is not known with certainty but the evidence suggests that each had a considerable work force, although if their internal structure reflected the fact that they had been formed by the nationalization of many separate firms it may have been much divided. Even so one other state industry, minting, appears to have employed a massive workforce; at least that is if credence can be given to the alleged loss of 7,000 soldiers when Aurelian stormed the mint in Rome.

Inevitably the gradual collapse of the western Empire wrought profound changes in, and a considerable contraction of, its industries, but it should be remembered that this was not the case in the eastern provinces where industry continued unabated into the Byzantine period.

The final conclusion of any discussion of Roman industry must be that its growth was largely the result of economic and social factors. It grew because its markets increased with the rising population and the urbanization of the western provinces, but with only a handful of exceptions, it was usually concerned with supplying local requirements. To take one example, research has shown that the products of even the more successful coarse pottery industries rarely travelled more than a few score kilometres from the kiln sites, and there is no reason to suppose that this industry differed from most others. The main exporting industries were those which provided the raw materials without which Roman civilization

could not have survived, such as foodstuffs, metals, timber and cloth; or, much more rarely, were monopolies, as was the papyrus industry of Egypt. Other exporting industries were largely dependent on being able to send their goods along routes and in ships which existed primarily to carry food and raw materials. It was for this reason that so many of the industrial centres of the Roman world lay on the coast or by one of the great navigable rivers.

The advantages which the Roman manufacturer had were immense when they are compared with those of his predecessors and successors. He worked within an efficient financial system, often in periods of prolonged peace when trade could flourish unhindered; he traded in what was probably the largest common market that the world has ever seen, with only a few minor taxes to pay on crossing provincial boundaries; communications both by land and sea were better than they had ever been before or were to be again for many centuries; and he sold his goods in a world in which there was immense private and public wealth. When all these factors are considered, it is necessary to ask why industry only expanded sufficiently to fulfil the increased demand rather than transforming itself and creating a true industrial revolution? Regrettably, of course, the question is largely rhetorical with no certain answer, but it is possible to define a number of factors which would have had to be overcome if such a revolution was to have occurred. Perhaps the key one is the fact that industry was socially unacceptable to the upper classes who effectively controlled the resources of the Empire. Only agriculture was a suitable occupation for them and while they were not loath to obtain their share of the profits of trade and industry they could not become openly involved in it. Without their direct interest change, if not impossible, was far less likely. The Roman legal system made it difficult to create the type of limited liability company with a multitude of shareholders which has proved particularly well suited to financing industrial concerns, and which ensures continuity through more than one generation. In consequence most Roman industry remained in the hands of individuals or small groups. Raising capital was usually a personal matter, for although banks existed the main source of loans remained the wealthy individual, which is why so many firms were owned by freedmen who had received the backing of their former owners. Nor was industry a fashionable field of investment; land was always preferred.

Finally there was an almost total lack of technical innovation and invention; a fact which cannot have been helped by the absence of patent laws. The industries of the fourth century were those which had existed at

the end of the Republic and they were still using the same techniques and processes. What could happen when a revolutionary new technique was applied was shown by the explosive growth of the glass industry after the invention of blowing, but this stands almost in isolation in all the centuries of Roman industrial history. The result was that growth could only be produced by scaling up technical processes of limited capacity, which meant that above a certain point production could be increased only by multiplying the number of units and not by changing to other processes better suited to large scale production. Undoubtedly the greatest limitation in this field was the almost total failure to utilize any sources of power other than those provided by animals and man. When it is remembered that the water-mill was invented in the hellenistic area in the first century BC this failure becomes even more surprising. The evidence suggests that the Romans used both the undershot and the more efficient overshot wheel, as well as devising a system of gears which converted the vertical rotation of the mill-wheel to the horizontal rotation of mill-stones ([fig. 23.3](#)). But this most important invention was only applied on a large scale to the grinding of corn. Admittedly there is one tantalizing passage in a late Roman poem which appears to indicate that a water-wheel on the river Ruwer, a tributary of

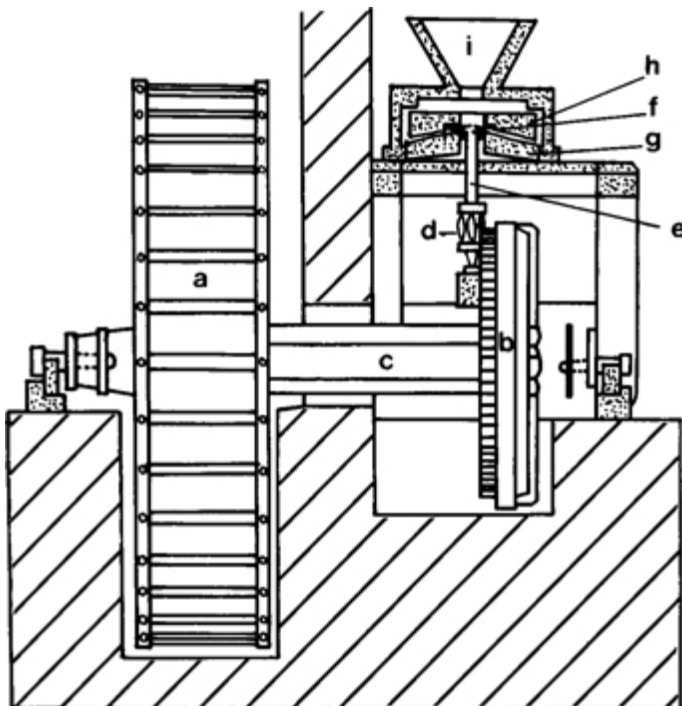


Figure 23.3 Reconstruction drawing of a water-mill for grinding cereals, as proposed by Vitruvius: (a) water-wheel; (b) vertical drum; (c) axle of a and b; (d) horizontal drum; (e) axle of d; (f) iron dovetail; (g, h) millstones; (i) hopper (after White)

the Mosel, was being used to power a saw for cutting stone, in which case it is possible that a cam was being used to convert the rotation of the wheel to the reciprocating motion of the saw. If so the failure of Roman industrialists to apply this to such similar processes as driving the bellows of furnaces, working the hammers of forges and fulling mills, or pumping water from mines becomes even more incomprehensible; had they done so they might have achieved a true industrial revolution. A hint of the power available to them is provided by the complex of sixteen mill-wheels arranged in two parallel rows which ran down the hillside at the Barbegal near Arles in Gaul (pl. 23.7). Built in the late third or fourth century with its own aqueduct to supply it with water, it was capable of grinding enough grain to feed many thousand people. Yet while it is perhaps the most impressive industrial monument to survive from the Roman period, it exemplifies the point made above: any increase in production was obtained by using a number of similar units rather than by taking an entirely new approach to the problem. Given the failure to make even the obvious uses

of water power it is hardly surprising that the other sources of power hinted at by such inventors as Hero of Alexander, who designed both primitive windmills and steam engines, went quite unnoticed. Roman industry was trapped in its own technical inertia and there it remained until the system of which it formed but one part finally collapsed in the west of Europe in the fifth century AD.



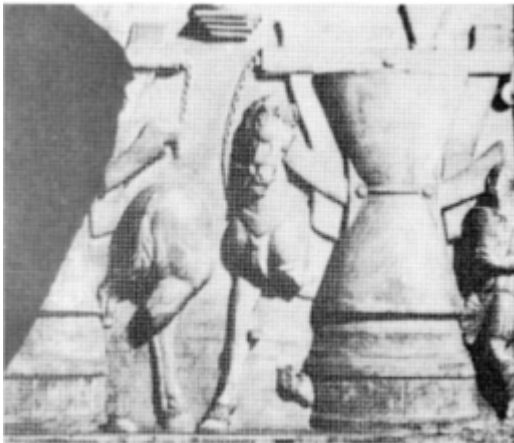
23.1a The first face of the funerary relief of L. Cornelius Atimetus, showing the forge on one side



23.1b The second face of the funerary relief of L. Cornelius Atimetus, showing the shop on the other



23.2 Pompeian bakery with millstones



23.3 Relief from Rome of a donkey-powered flour mill



23.4 Relief from the monument of the Haterii, Rome, depicting a building under construction with a crane



23.5 Frescoes from the *triclinium* of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii, showing cupids acting as (a) perfumers; (b) goldsmiths; (c) fullers



23.6 Arretine crater by M. Perennius Tigranus, decorated with scenes showing four pairs of lovers in different attitudes; second half of the first century BC



23.7 The sequence of water-mills at the Barbegal, near Arles, France

• MINING •

Ann Woods

With the expansion of Roman influence and power during the Principate and early Empire, new areas rich in mineral deposits became available for exploitation and the Romans were quick to take advantage of them. Their mining techniques display a degree of expertise which has been largely unappreciated until relatively recently: most reports on Roman mining methods have concentrated on the more obvious shaft-and-gallery system (with its associated equipment) that was employed in underground mining, with the result that the rather more impressive surface techniques have remained in the background.

Evidence of mining can be found in many provinces of the Empire but probably the most spectacular remains have been found in Spain, first in the hard rock regions of the south which were exploited from an early period, and second in the auriferous country of the north-west. In these two geologically very different areas the full range of skills involved in Roman mining can be seen: although possessing little geological knowledge by modern standards, they were adept at suiting mining techniques to the immediate conditions, particularly in the latter region. In recent years, this has been the subject of much research, and systematic recording of the sites, aided by literary evidence, has enabled convincing interpretations to be made.

This contribution attempts to present a general survey of the many and varied mining techniques employed by the Romans. It is not intended as an exhaustive treatment, but rather as a summary of certain specific techniques, with emphasis being placed on the results of recent research. The descriptions of mines and techniques recorded herein largely represent

the results of mining on a grand scale. It is worth remembering that smaller, less organized ventures were probably just as common but have left less impressive or obvious remains. Many mines cannot be accurately dated and existing descriptions and interpretations of much mining evidence must be approached with caution. Many sites were mined by successive generations throughout antiquity, ore extraction continuing until the source was exhausted. Similar techniques and tools were used from prehistory through to the medieval period, and later mining activity may have obliterated all traces of earlier endeavours. In addition, there was a tendency during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to attribute all traces of mining to the Romans and it is only recently that the accuracy of such reports has been questioned. In so far as early work is concerned, the value of the extensive survey provided by Davies (1935) must not be underestimated: fifty years after publication it remains the standard work on the subject. This, and the recent work by Healy (1978), provide far more detail than it is possible to include here on the ore deposits exploited by the Romans at various sites throughout the Empire. They also deal with aspects, such as administration of the mines, which are beyond the scope of the present paper.

The primary mining techniques employed by the Romans were dictated, not by the type of mineral being mined, but rather by the geological and geographical conditions in which it occurred. Primary ore deposits, such as veins, occur in hard-rock formations; the usual method for mining these deposits was by the digging of shafts and galleries to follow the mineral vein through the rock. In contrast soft-rock deposits, particularly the ones from which gold was extracted in north-west Spain, were mined by surface techniques: such deposits are too soft or too shallow to be tunnelled into and the ore or metal is distributed through them in such a way as to make that type of mining impracticable.

In contrast, methods used for the final collection of the ore were determined by the nature of the mineral concerned. Because of the high specific gravity of gold itself, and of cassiterite and galena, the most common ores of tin and lead respectively, all can be retrieved after mining or crushing by techniques involving the use of flowing water: they will settle out while lighter material is washed away. Such methods will be classified here as secondary mining techniques, as opposed to primary techniques used to obtain the ore from the environment in the first place.

In their early papers dealing with gold mining techniques, Lewis and Jones (1969; 1970) used a classification system based on the occurrence of the mineral deposits and postulated two basic categories, alluvial and

placer, the distinction between them being largely based on the position of the mined mineral deposit. Consequently, they distinguished between 'low-level placer deposits' in rivers and river valleys and 'high-level alluvial deposits' (1970, 169), the latter supposedly being better stratified (1969, 245) and of greater age (1970, 169). These definitions were also followed by Jones and Bird (1972) and Bird (1972). Such a distinction is, however, geologically invalid in that alluvial deposits are in fact typical placer deposits and, moreover, there are various other types of placers, such as eluvial-, beach- or bench-placers, and not just the stream-placers that Lewis and Jones have used as their placer deposit. A fuller description of these can be found in Read and Watson (1968, 608ff.) or as summarized by Healy (1978, 30ff.).

Healy (1978, 87–90) has lumped the alluvial and placer mining techniques of Lewis and Jones together under the title of placer mining but has introduced another category of opencast mining in which he includes shallow, and often not extensive, opencast mines which appear to have been merely excavated, and the ore-bearing material collected, without the use of any water-based mining technique. This second category, however, also appears invalid: the most obvious signs of Roman workings are the huge opencasts that are the result of their mining techniques, particularly in soft-rock deposits, involving the use of water.

Unfortunately it is not possible to place all these categories of deposit and their associated mining techniques under the one classification of soft-rock mining: the methods normally associated with soft-rock deposits have also been used for hard-rock mining at Brañ la Folgueirosa, Iboyo and other sites in north-west Spain (Bird, 1972) where the more usual hard-rock techniques - the shaft-and-gallery system - were little utilized.

Therefore, as the same mining method could be, and sometimes was, applied to totally different types of site and mineral deposit, a distinction based on the occurrence of the ore does not appear to be the most appropriate. The classification used here is accordingly based on the type of mining method used, and two main categories can be seen to exist: surface and underground mining. The mining methods applied to ore deposits described by earlier writers (Lewis and Jones, 1969; 1970; Jones and Bird, 1972; Bird, 1972) as alluvials and placers, together with Healy's opencast and placer mining, will all here be described as surface mining techniques. The shaft-and-gallery system, and immediately related techniques, usually associated with hard-rock deposits, will fall under the category of underground mining and will be described first.

In general, Roman underground mining was based on a shaft-and-gallery

technique : they used shafts, adits and galleries to locate, follow and extract an ore-bearing vein. Most Roman shafts were square or rectangular and Davies (1935, 21) has described, with examples, the methods used to make both types. Circular shafts were used less frequently but have nevertheless been recorded from Rio Tinto (Palmer, 1926–7, 310). The shape of the shaft would largely have been determined by the type of rock it was being dug into and not, as suggested elsewhere (Healy, 1978, 91) by the type of lining material: whereas the latter could be easily adapted to the shape of the shaft (stone for round shafts, wood for angular), making an inappropriately-shaped shaft (such as a circular shaft in a strongly fissile rock like schist) would have been extremely difficult.

Entry to the mines via the shafts was often achieved by foothold notches cut in the side walls, as at Rio Tinto (Palmer, 1926–7, Fig. 83 or Healy, 1978, pl. 19) or by ladder. In some instances wood was hammered into holes cut in the shaft walls to form a more permanent and substantial ladder. These were usually set towards the side of the shaft, as at Linares, or even close to the corner, presumably to leave room for the removal of buckets from the mines. In some instances the spacing between these beams



Figure 24.1 Spain, showing provincial boundaries and principal mining sites mentioned in the text

was so great that it is thought that workers sat on them to pass the buckets of ore (or possibly water) to the surface; rock-cut steps in sloping adits may have been used for a similar purpose.

Many of the Roman adits are extremely long and in some cases have

been hacked through barren rock: at Centenillo, Rickard (1927, 921–2) recorded several lengthy adits, one of them over 1000 m (1,100 yd.) before it reached the ore body. He also (1928, 132) commented on the small size of the Roman levels at Rio Tinto, stating that this (around 1–1.2 m; 1.1–1.5 yd.) and their arched roofs made them distinguishable from other workings. Size, however, appears not to be a criterion for distinguishing Roman workings from those of other periods: Davies (1933–4, 16–17) records a great variety of sizes for Roman galleries. Neither, it seems, can shape be used as a distinguishing feature: square, rectangular, arched and trapezoidal adits and galleries are all known. Many of the last are wider at the top than at the bottom, the extra width supposedly being to allow for the miners' shoulders, especially if buckets of ore or tools were being carried. A similar technique, producing what are known as coffin levels, was employed in more recent times in the lead mines of Derbyshire. The lower gallery at Dolaucothi (Wales) is 2.5 m (2.7 yd.) high, 1.2 m (1.3 yd.) wide at the bottom and 1.9 m (2 yd.) wide at the top (Boon, 1974a, 486 and Fig. 17). In comparison with Spanish galleries of similar shape, the one from Dolaucothi is much larger and this has led Boon to suggest that beasts of burden, possibly pit ponies, were used to remove debris from the mines.

Fire-setting was probably the method used to drive adits and galleries in the harder rocks and evidence has been reported from many sites. However, burnt wood in mines is not always indicative of the use of this process: fires may have been lit at the bases of shafts to create draughts for ventilation, and burnt remains and blackened walls may therefore be a result.

In fire-setting, a fire is lighted against the rock face; the heat from the fire causes the rock to expand which may be sufficient to crack it. In most cases, however, the hot rock is quenched with water, the resulting rapid contracting ensuring even greater disintegration. This process has been used since prehistoric times and was presumably particularly effective on siliceous rocks. Quartz has a high co-efficient of thermal expansion, increasing in volume quite rapidly when heated, especially at the temperatures that might be attained during fire-setting. These large expansions would make it particularly susceptible to cracking by heating and, if temperatures in excess of the inversion point were reached, the corresponding rapid reduction in size brought about by sudden quenching and lowering of the temperature would achieve even more effective results.

There is literary evidence for the use of fire-setting in antiquity: amongst others it is described by Pliny (xxxiii, 71) and described and illustrated by Agricola (v, 118–19) ([fig. 24.2](#)). Pliny mentions the use of vinegar for the

quenching of siliceous rocks. Such a suggestion is strange for it could not have had a chemical effect on such rocks, but he specifically mentions it in this context and not in relation to calcareous rocks where

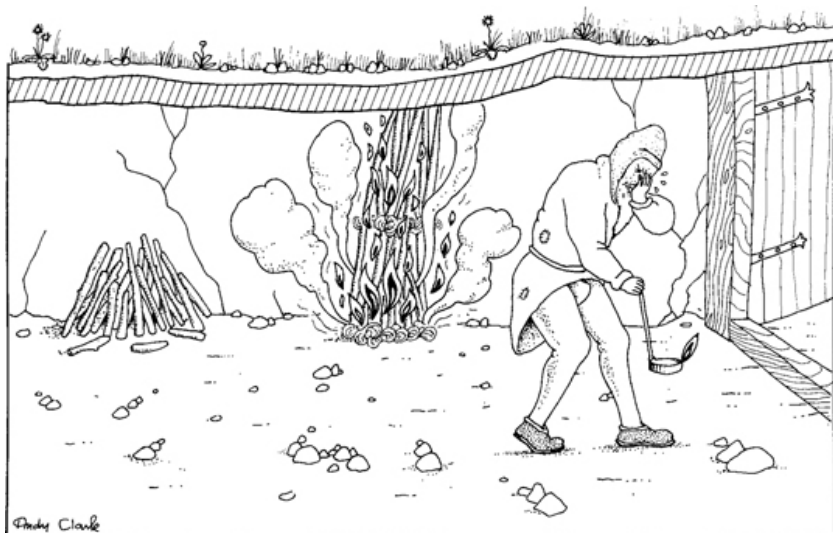


Figure 24.2 Fire-setting as depicted by Agricola

its action might have been employed to accelerate disintegration. This passage from Pliny has been much debated elsewhere (for example Davies, 1933–4, 20; 1935, 22; Howat, 1939, 239–40; Forbes, 1963, 203) without really arriving at a satisfactory explanation. Forbes, however, does include a helpful anecdote: ‘The method is still in use in Northern Italy in road-building. There the author was assured that the vinegar was “a very cold substance”, which would strengthen the water’s effect, for did not a drop of strong vinegar on the top of the hand cause an icy feeling?’

Arched galleries and adits may well be the result of fire-setting. Howat has illustrated the typical elliptical cross-section due to ‘the manner in which the flames licked the roof of the passage’ and Collins has noted the tendency of such passages to slope upward because of the heat being more intense on the roof than on the floor. He also drew attention to the characteristic rounded or conchoidal depressions left after thin flakes of rock are removed by fire-setting and to the readily recognizable rock debris that results from the use of this method.

Owing to the relatively small size of most of the galleries and adits, little shoring was needed, but examples of wooden props have been found at various sites. At Tharsis the walls of the passage, as illustrated by

Stevenson (1876), were lined with circular wooden posts supporting recurrent beams. In one of the galleries at Dolaucothi remains of wooden posts and slabs used to support the roof have been found (Boon, 1974a, 483).

Numerous tools of wood, stone and metal have been found associated with Roman mine workings. These too, like the actual excavation method employed, would have varied according to the rock type. Stone hammers and picks, many of them grooved for hafting, have been found in practically every mine in southern Spain (see, for example, Sandars, 1905; Rothenberg and Blanco-Freijeiro, 1981) and have been assigned to Roman mining operations. Recently, however, some doubt has been expressed over this; research by the Huelva Archaeometallurgical Project indicates that many of these tools may not have been found *in situ* or may represent secondary use (Rothenberg and Blanco-Freijeiro, 1981, 165).

Iron tools have also been found, again primarily from the Spanish mines, and must be considered the main tool for hard rock mining. Adit, shaft and gallery walls reveal imprints of the tools used on them, allowing conclusions to be drawn concerning the actual mining methods employed. The workings at Timna in the Arabah provide plentiful evidence of pick marks in the soft white sandstone from which the Romans extracted copper (Rothenberg, 1972, pl. 118) and some to be seen in the walls at Dolaucothi show that the galleries were dug from the outside inwards (Boon, 1974a, 487). Chisel and wedge marks have been found in many other workings. Davies (1935, 20) notes that the absence of tool marks in one of the galleries at Linares suggests the use of wooden wedges; these were hammered into the face and, when wetted, would expand and crack the rock.

In general, careful working of the rock face is a characteristic of Roman mining techniques; this must, in many cases, have been difficult to achieve given the relatively low levels of illumination available to the miners. Lighting appears to have been provided almost entirely by small ceramic oil lamps. Examples have been found in many mines where they were placed in niches cut in the walls. At Sotiel Coronada, lamp niches were found less than a metre (3.3 ft) apart near the roof of adits, and occasionally containing clay which had been used to ensure stability of the lamps (Davies, 1935, 121).

Ventilation must also have been a problem, particularly in the deeper mines. When vertical shafts are used, two or more are often necessary to ensure ventilation; this may account for the frequent occurrence of pairs of shafts at sites such as Rio Tinto and Laurion. The lighting of a fire at the

base of one shaft would create increased draught down the other and so provide fresh air. Some shafts are reported as showing grooves down the sides so that they could be divided in half with timber partitions to perform the same function (Davies, 1935, 24). Further ventilation problems may have been created by the use of fire-setting. Although the fire itself would have helped to promote a draught, the smoke, and the fumes brought about by dowsing and quenching the hot rock face, coupled with any gases given off by heated ores, must have made the atmosphere in mines extremely unpleasant. Sulphide ores in particular must have been a problem in this way: the fire would have caused partial roasting of some of them and the evolution of sulphur dioxide. If Pliny's description of the use of vinegar is accurate, the additional smell must have made the mines absolutely unbearable, and it would have taken some time for the air to clear sufficiently for work to resume. McCarthy (in Davies, 1933–4, 40) states that after fire-setting was used in a Gold Coast mine he visited, some three days had to elapse before the mine could be entered comfortably. Agricola's illustration of the use of fire-setting ([fig. 24.2](#)), showing a miner apparently suffering from the atmosphere in the mine, is likely to be an accurate representation.

Probably the greatest problem in the European mines, however, was water. Difficulties were always encountered when mining at depth as the Romans were not able to alter the height of the water table. They solved drainage problems by three main methods: first by bailing, second by cutting cross adits and drainage channels, and third by the use of mechanical water-raising devices such as the screw pump and the water-wheel.

Pliny, in his description of silver mining, mentions (xxxiii, 97) the use of bailing for draining the mines. He also records the use of human chains (xxxiii, 71) for removing the ore from the mines. Slave and convict labour probably provided the workforce for both these activities. Numerous examples of copper-alloy and esparto grass buckets, the latter made watertight by a lining of tar or pitch, have been found in Roman workings, especially at Cartagena and Mazarron (Davies, 1935, 25 and Fig. 23). Their capacity was about 15 litres (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ gal.). They are similar in appearance to examples of ore-haulage baskets that have been found, also being strengthened by four or six wooden ribs (see Healy, 1978, pl. 32c), but have a pointed base and a V-shaped cross-bar for a handle; such a shape would tilt of its own accord when placed in water and thus fill more easily. Davies also suggests (1935, 25) that the five bronze rings found at Rio Tinto may have been frames for similar buckets.

Copper or copper-alloy buckets, which could have been used for carrying both ore and water, have been recorded from several sites in southern Spain. The one from a mine near Posadas (Sandars, 1905, Fig. 15) has a handle that would have allowed the bucket to tilt when dipped into water. Most writers, however, record that this bucket has dents in its side, probably caused by its being bumped against the side of the shaft while being hauled to the surface by rope, the inference being that it is an ore, rather than a bailing bucket.

The second method for drainage was the cutting of trenches and cross adits down which water could flow to a sump whence it could be removed by bailing. Diodorus Siculus records the use of this process (v, 37, 3):

And now and then, as they go down deep, they come upon flowing subterranean rivers, but they overcome the might of these rivers by diverting the streams which flow in on them by means of channels leading off at an angle.

Such a system appears to have taken time to develop: few such adits have been found, for example, from the early workings at Cartagena. Davies (1935, 24) records the presence of deep cross-cuts at Madenokhorio, Dolaucothi, Rio Tinto, Centenillo and Minas dos Mouros. At the last site, a narrow channel 5 metres (5.5 yd) deep was cut in the floor of the adit, carefully following the line of the side walls (Harrison, 1931, 143 and Fig. 4). This may have been to increase drainage facilities although the somewhat confusing account provided by its discoverer does not indicate this, stating instead that it was 'to permit of the deepening of the whole open-cut'. In view of the fact that this adit was only 7 metres (7.6 yd) above the level of the nearby river and that there were three specially made circular chambers along it, each containing a granite block and showing tracks that were most probably worn by animals driving machinery, it seems likely that the channel was in fact intended for drainage rather than as a preliminary step in deepening the adit.

The most effective drainage was accomplished by the use of machinery and there is abundant evidence for the use of both screw pumps and water-wheels. The Archimedean or Egyptian screw consisted of helical vanes wound around a central core encased in a barrel of wooden planking. It was rotated to raise water from one level to another. The method of construction is described in some detail by Vitruvius (x, 6, 1–4) and Diodorus Siculus (v, 37, 3) describes the use of such screw pumps in the Spanish mines:

they draw out the waters of the streams by means of what is called by men the Egyptian screw ... and by the use of such screws they carry the water in successive lifts as far as the entrance, drying up in this way the spot where they are digging and making it well suited to the furtherance of their operations.

Several examples have been found to support Vitruvius' description and the screws appear to have been used in the Spanish and Portuguese mines during the first and early second centuries. Five were found at Centenillo; that from Level 10 (fig. 24.3) was 4.27 m (4.6 yd) long and consisted of a wooden core some 20 cm (7.7 in.) in diameter, to which a copper helical vane was attached, in a wooden barrel 50 cm (20 in.) in diameter. Iron spigots were fixed at each end for pivoting and it was rotated by means of cleats attached to the exterior of the barrel about half-way along its length.

Other screws were longer: that found at Beaune (Haute Vienne), for example, made of chestnut, measured 8 m (8.7 yd) in length and 30 cm (11.8 in.) in diameter (Forbes, 1963, 215). The three screws found at Sotiel Coronada were 3.6 m (3.9 yd.) long and 48 cm (19 in.) in diameter. The helix of one of these oak screws, clearly illustrated by Healy (1978, pl. 24b) is composed of small slabs of wood nailed and glued on top of each other; Davies has suggested (1935, 27) that wooden vanes would swell in the presence of water and therefore leak less, but that copper would cope better with the weight of the water. A lead barrel for a screw has also been found in a Spanish mine

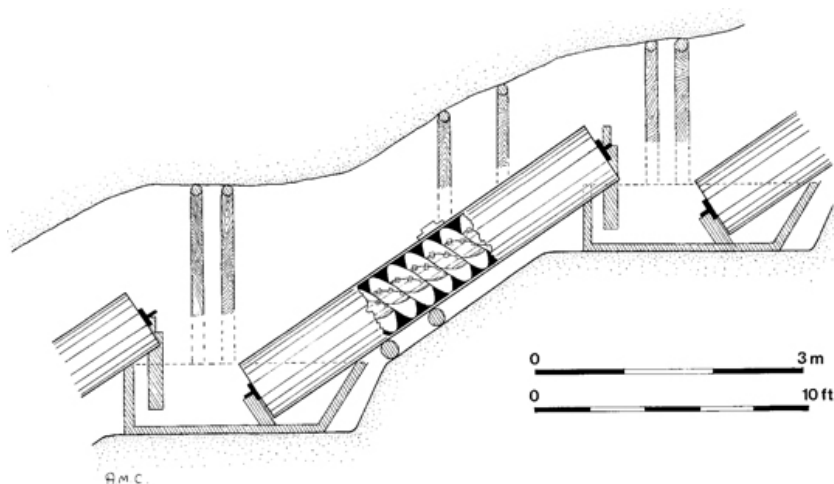


Figure 24.3 Archimedeal screw-pump used for drainage at Centenillo (*after Palmer*)

but there is no proof that it dates from the Roman period.

The screws were mounted in series, raising water from one sump to another which was emptied in turn by the next screw. Some, such as the example from Centenillo ([fig. 24.3](#)), were turned by the cleats featured on the outer barrel while others, for example at Alcaracejos (Portugal), were probably turned by the use of a crank handle. The latter method was employed in Japanese mines of the seventeenth century and illustrated on a scroll dated to 1840 (Bromehead, 1942).

The lift obtaining by a screw pump is a result of the length of the pump itself, its angle of inclination, and the pitch of the spiral vane. Vitruvius (x, 6, 4), using the Pythagorean triangle as his basis, suggests an angle of about 37 degrees as the required inclination for the mounting of such screws and, although his original illustration has been lost, later (usually medieval) depictions commonly show such an angle of inclination. However, this would have made the screw extremely difficult to turn by means of human power treading on the barrel cleats but may, as Landels suggests (1978, 61), represent a compromise, being chosen to give maximum lift at the cost of reduced output. Other illustrations, however, show a much smaller angle of inclination: a wallpainting from the Casa dell'Efebo at Pompeii (illustrated by Forbes, 1963, 213) and which may show a screw pump in use, shows only a very slight angle of tilt, as does a terracotta relief from Alexandria (Healy, 1978, pl. 25). Increased efficiency may have been obtained by using a greater angle of inclination than in these depictions or by turning the screw with a crank handle. At Sotiel Coronada, the screws were mounted at an angle of 15–20 degrees, similar to that shown on the terracotta model, but at Centenillo the angle was closer to 35 degrees ([fig. 24.3](#)).

It has been calculated (Landels, 1978, 63) that a screw pump 2.4 m (2.6 yd) long and 33 cm (12 in.) in diameter, mounted at the 37-degree angle suggested by Vitruvius, could raise between 9,600 l (2,100 gal.) and 14,000 l (3,000 gal.) of water, depending on its efficiency, to a head of 1.16 m (3.8 ft) in one hour. Obviously, the screws were

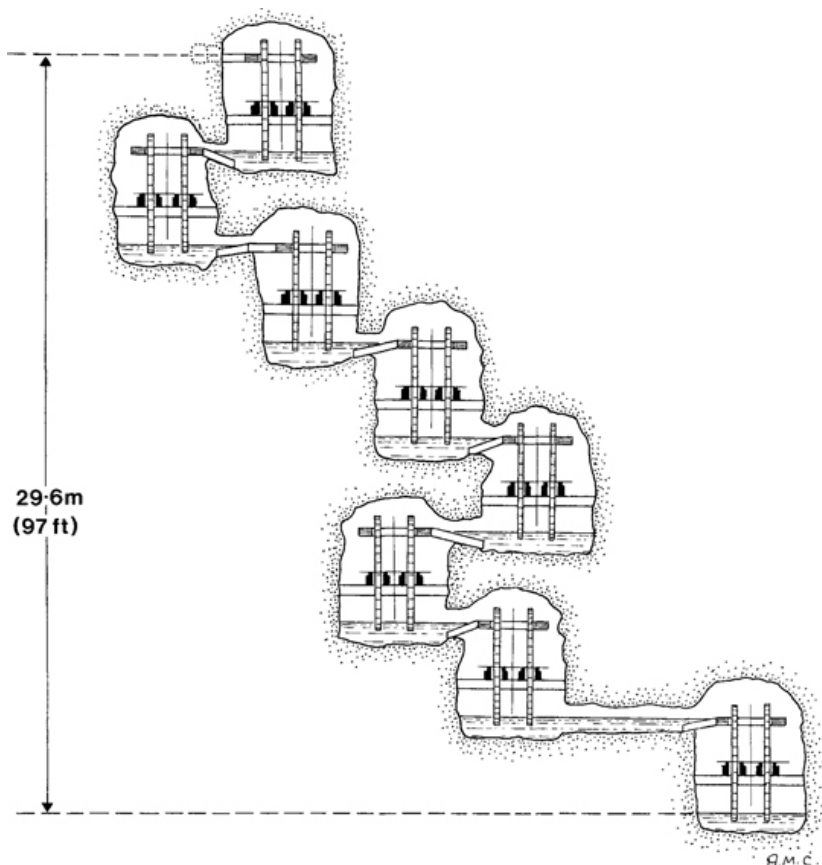


Figure 24.4 Eight pairs of water-wheels used to drain one mine at Rio Tinto (*after Palmer*)

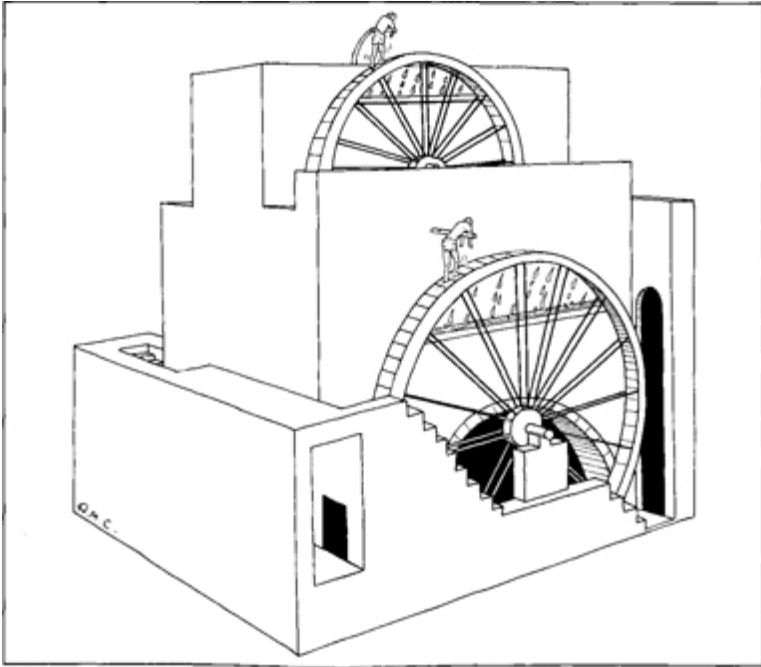


Figure 24.5 Water-wheels used to raise water to a higher level at the Terme del Mithra, Ostia (after Schiefer)

not as effective for water-raising as wheels but they had the advantage of providing a more even flow of water.

There is no evidence for the use in mines of the simple *tympanum*, described in some detail by Vitruvius (x, 4, 1–2) and by Landels (1978, 63–6). Abundant evidence does, however, exist for the other main type of drainage machine, the waterwheel: wheels or fragments have been found in many of the Spanish and Portuguese mines as well as at Dolaucothi.

These, basically undershot wheels in reverse, could raise water to a much greater height than could the screw pump and, although requiring more manpower for operation, appear to have been the main agency for mine drainage, particularly during and after the first century AD. They were presumably only employed in mines where the expected ore yield was sufficiently great to justify the expense as, for example, at Rio Tinto, where remains of eight pairs have been found in one mine (fig. 24.4) and where traces of some forty wheels in all have been located. Surviving fragments indicate that they were provided in pre-fabricated kits: spokes or side-pieces of the rim buckets, for example on the wheels from Tharsis (Stevenson, 1876, 280) and one from Rio Tinto (Boon and Williams, 1966,

124), were marked with letters or numerals to assist in their assembly underground.

The wheels were openwork, of wood (usually pine), and had compartments for

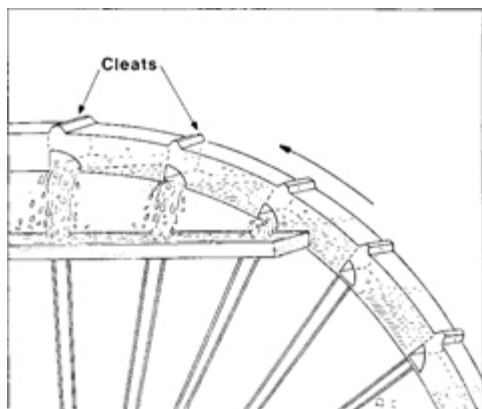


Figure 24.6 Section of the rim of a water-wheel showing the cleats used for rotating the wheel and the compartments in which the water was raised (*after Landels*)

raising water incorporated in their circumference. A brief but adequate description is provided by Vitruvius (x, 4, 3), emphasizing that these wheels were capable of raising water higher than the ordinary *tympanum*. The wheels were turned by men treading on the cleats on the outer rim, balancing themselves by means of ropes or possibly by support bars, as in [fig. 24.5](#). Water was raised in the compartments and deposited in a launder ([figs 24.5 and 24.6](#)) at the top of the rotation whence it flowed into a sump which would be emptied by the next wheel. [Figure 24.5](#) also shows how this would have been done; even though it is a reconstruction of water-wheels being used to raise water in the Terme del Mithra at Ostia rather than to drain mines, the principle is the same. Each compartment had an opening in the side of the wheel-rim, roughly quadrant-shaped, through which the water entered from the sump and flowed out into the launder at the top. The wheel was turned so that the straight edges of these openings were on the leading end of the compartment ([fig. 24.6](#)) in order to reduce spillage.

The wheels were frequently used in pairs ([fig. 24.7](#)); in some cases, as at Rio Tinto ([fig. 24.4](#)), they were employed to lift water through a series of separate but connected levels, while at others they were arranged in series along sloping galleries. When worked in pairs, the wheels discharged their contents into the same launder; if two launders were used turbulence would

have occurred in the water at the junction of the launders and this was avoided by rotating the wheels in opposite directions, thus propelling the water in the same direction along the launder (fig. 24.7).

At Saõ Domingos, nine wheels were found, arranged up a gallery sloping at about 40 degrees. An illustration of one of these wheels (Cross Brown in Palmer, 1926–7, 319) indicates that, unlike the Rio Tinto wheels, it was used on its own for it is provided with a launder on each side and, presumably, with openings on both sides of the rim compartments. Most other wheels, however, have only one opening, indicating that they were part of a pair: Landels (1978, 70) considers that the second opening, as well

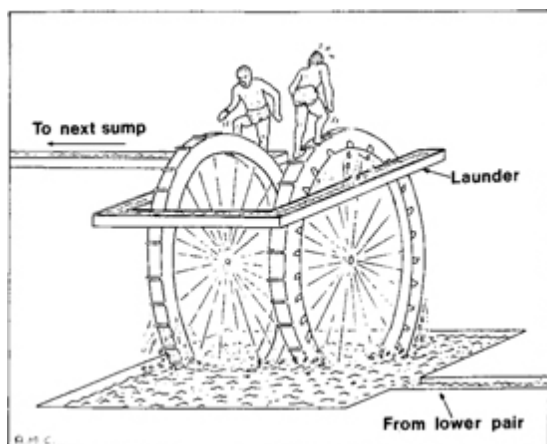


Figure 24.7 Reconstruction of the method used to work pairs of wheels (*after Landels*)

of this, and the fact that the system of numbers marked on the spokes of the wheel from Rio Tinto was ignored when it was restored in the British Museum, he considers the reconstruction to be inaccurate. He levels similar criticism at the reconstruction drawing of the Dolaucothi drainage wheel (Boon and Williams, 1966, Fig. 6): the fact that this has been reconstructed from just one board, less than 1 metre (1.1 yd) in length, may account for inaccuracies and suggests that to attempt such a reconstruction on so little evidence was perhaps optimistic.

As with screw pumps, extant remains of the wheels indicate that they varied considerably in size, presumably dictated by the size of the gallery in which they were required to function and by the amount of water that needed to be removed. The Dolaucothi wheel has an estimated diameter of 3.6 m (3.9 yd) but is illustrated at rather less than this in the reconstruction drawing, two from Saõ Domingos were 3.65 m (3.95 yd), while another

eight from that site measured 4.87 m (5.2 yd). The average size of the Rio Tinto wheels was 4.5 m (4.9 yd), while that reported from Logroño was 4.57 m (4.95 yd). Other reports have included a wheel from León province in northern Spain which had a diameter of over 6 m (6.5 yd) (Holmann in Davies, 193 3–4, 43).

The height that water can be lifted by such wheels is related to the diameter of the wheel, and the amount is determined by the number and size of the rim compartments. Palmer's calculations (1926–7, 302–4) indicate that a wheel c. 4.65 m (5 yd) in diameter could raise about 861 (19 gal.) per minute over a height of 3.65 m (4 yd). Following on from this, it has been calculated that the nest of sixteen wheels found at Rio Tinto (fig. 24.4) could have raised nearly 11,000 l (2,420 gal.) in an hour over 29.6 m (32 yd), the total height attainable by the eight pairs. Palmer's estimated 61 per cent efficiency may not appear spectacular but the sheer amount of water that could be raised relatively large distances for comparatively little expenditure of energy made them far more effective than any other method employed for mine drainage.

Water was a major factor in surface mining techniques too. In contrast, however, the problem was not one of removal but of supply: the characteristic techniques employed in surface mining involved the use of millions of litres of water per day and, as most of the sites where these methods were employed were situated in elevated positions, extensive aqueduct and tank systems had to be constructed to supply and store the vast quantities required.

Until relatively recently less study had been undertaken of surface mining techniques. The existence of most of the gold mines in north-west Spain was known, but little had been done in the way of systematic recording and interpretation; over the last decade or so, however, this area in particular has been the subject of several long-term research programmes (for example, Lewis and Jones, 1970; Jones and Bird, 1972; Bird, 1972; Domergue and Herail, 1977; 1978) and the surface features at Dolaucothi have also been subjected to some close scrutiny (Jones *et al.*, 1960; Lewis and Jones, 1969; Jones and Lewis, 1971; Boon, 1974a). This increased research has resulted in detailed planning and recording of the sites but has also, as in the case of los Castellones/Luyego I, produced rather different interpretations (Bird, 1980; Domergue, 1984).

The most characteristic feature of Roman surface mining techniques is the extensive use of water as a mining agent. The two main methods were hushing (also called booming) and ground sluicing. For the former large tanks, fed by aqueduct systems, were constructed; when a sufficient head of

water had collected, it was released in a wave to pour down over the deposit. It could have been used for three purposes: first to clear overburden and expose mineral deposits, second to wash the latter down to pools or tanks from which the ore could be extracted later by a variety of washing techniques, or third to remove mining debris. The result of the long-term use of hushing is an opencast. In contrast, ground sluicing is a method that can be used when a continuous flow of water is available and where ore deposits occur nearer to the surface. As with hushing, it may be used to remove overburden and to wash out ore but is generally employed on a much smaller scale. Archaeological evidence for the use of such a technique is limited as it can be used to clear areas down to bedrock and may thus remove all traces of the actual mining method itself. By analogy with more recent gold-mining practices, such as those employed in the nineteenth-century booms in California and Australia, it is reasonable to assume that this method was employed even at sites where no traces remain. Evidence of its use has, though, been detected at several sites in northern Spain, along the Rio Duerna.

One oft-quoted method that the Romans did not use, however, was hydraulicizing. This term, *sensu stricto*, should only be applied to 'excavation ... by streams of water under press from nozzles' (Peele, 1963, 10–550). Vertical faces of opencasts or other surface deposits are hosed with water under pressure, either to wash the material down or to undercut banks to bring about their collapse. The flow of water back from the face carries the washed-down material to sluice boxes where separation of the ore particles can be effected (for fuller details see Griffith, 1960; Harrison, 1962; Peele, 1963). Although now not much in evidence for mining, the technique can be seen in use at St Austell, Cornwall, where it is the principal method employed for the extraction of china clay.

The term hydraulicizing was unfortunately adopted by Lewis and Jones (1969, 269) and defined as 'The use of a continuous flow of water to break down soft beds.' Later (1970, 177) they elaborated on this when, in their description of las Medulas, they stated that

it [water] was played directly on to the deposit itself in a continuous stream, in exactly the same way as ground sluices were used in the nineteenth century. The stream has thus cut the numerous gullies in the northern half of the site, as already described. This type of work is known as hydraulicizing by analogy with the modern practice of mining metalliferous gravels and placer deposits with jets provided with a head of water.

It is immediately obvious that they are confusing the two different types of mining: they are describing ground sluicing but then calling it hydraulicizing. The great difference between the two methods is that hydraulicizing is a high-pressure technique. Some subsequent writers (for example Healy, 1978, 88), following the definition given by Lewis and Jones, also state that this method was used by the Romans. Even greater confusion is evident in a recently published resumé of Roman mining in which, for a change, hushing is correctly described and named but then conflated with modern hydraulicizing techniques :

the water was directed into a number of large storage tanks, from which it was discharged in a series of waves, to remove the overburden. This latter process, known technically as 'hushing', is still used, and for exactly the same purpose, in modern tin mining, with the greatly increased velocity provided by jets of water discharged from 'monitors'. (White, 1984, 116–17)

In that there is absolutely no evidence for the use of such a technique by the Romans and the fact that they were, it seems, incapable of obtaining the kind of pressure necessary for its successful employment, any suggestion of the use of hydraulicizing must be dismissed. The term was not used by Bird (1972) or by Jones and Bird (1972) who have described ground sluicing and called it just that, and it is to be hoped that the term will not appear in future discussions of Roman mining techniques.

Evidence for the use of hushing is available from nearly all the sites in northwest Spain, as well as from Dolaucothi, and tanks or remains thereof can still be seen posi-

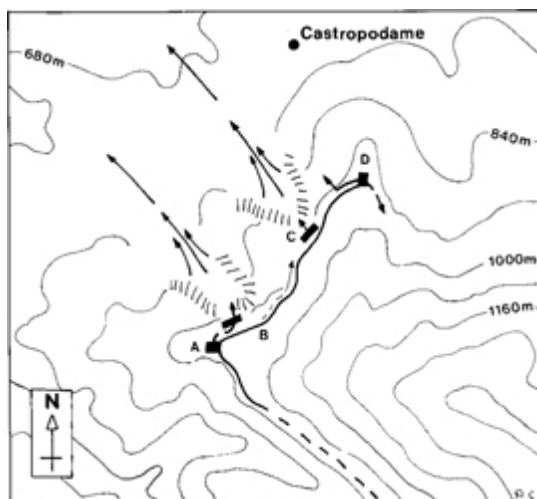


Figure 24.8 Castropodame, a soft-rock site, with hushing tanks above the opencasts (after Bird)

tioned above and slightly to one side of the opencasts (figs 24.8, 24.9, 24.10). In most cases, there are several tanks grouped around each opencast: los Castellones, for example, has three at the main U-shaped opencast, constructed in a stepped pattern up the hillside (Jones and Bird, 1972, 64), while at las Medulas a cluster of five tanks is situated between two opencasts on the south ridge. At other sites, however, such as Fresnedo and Castropodame (fig. 24.8), only one hushing tank was used to work each opencast.

There appears to have been no standard size or shape for the tanks and great variations exist. As far as shape is concerned, some are square but most are rectangular, and examples of both long narrow and shallow wide tanks are known. Shape appears to have been largely determined by the position of the tank on the site and the size was presumably dictated by the expected extent of the ore deposit and the amount of overburden that had to be removed to expose it. The tanks at las Medulas mentioned above measured about 100 x 20 m (109 x 21 yd.) (Lewis and Jones, 1970, 175) while the three from los Castellones measured 57 x 16 m (62 x 17.5 yd.), 65 x 20 m (70 x 21 yd.), and 50 x 18 m (57 x 19.5 yd.) (Jones and Bird, 1972, 64). At the latter site, hushing also appears to have been done with water from the dams to the west of the site; these were semi-circular, with two sluices, and were used during what Jones and Bird have interpreted as the later stages of the site (1972, 68–70).

The above sites are examples of soft-rock sites where one would expect

hushing to be the principal mining method employed, but numerous examples of hushing tanks have also been found at hard-rock sites such as Iboyo, Fresno, Puerto del Palo, Braña la Folgueirosa (Bird, 1972) and Dolaucothi. The main purpose for hushing at sites such as these would have been to remove overburden and expose the ore-bearing veins. Lewis and Jones have provided good evidence for changes in function of hushing tanks at

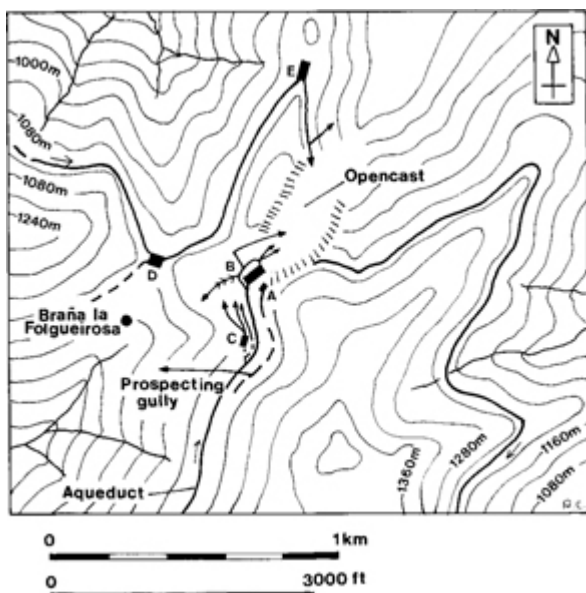


Figure 24.9 Braña la Folgueirosa, a hard-rock site, where hushing appears to have been used (*after Bird*)

Dolaucothi (1969, 255) and indeed this is to be expected. Examples are known of the conversion of such tanks for subsequent use as reservoirs for water storage in general or for providing water for functions such as sluicing and ore washing.

At Puerto del Palo, a tank measuring 55x5 m (60 x 5.5 yd.), with walls over 3.5 m (3.8 yd.) high, is positioned some 15 m (16.5 yd.) from the present edge of the larger opencast (Lewis and Jones, 1970, 179). Tank B at Braña la Folgueirosa (fig. 24.9) measures 61 x 10 m (72 x 11 yd.), survives to a height of over two metres (2.2 yd.), and probably had a capacity of 1,300,000 l (286,000 gal.) when full. It was constructed by digging into the hillside and using the excavated material for the outer bank (Bird, 1972, 41). Several of the tanks at Dolaucothi have been excavated and have yielded evidence for the methods of construction employed as well as of

changes in function of the tanks. The larger tank fed by the Anell aqueduct at this site measured 27.5 x 12m (30 x 13 yd.) and was also built by cutting back into the hillside. Tank C, approximately 24 x 6 m (26 x 6.5 yd.), originally had an outer wall 7.9 m (8.5 yd.) across constructed of laminated clay and shale, strengthened on the interior by a clay layer over 3 m (3.3 yd.) thick, and further reinforced on the outside by turf layers and a timber beam (Jones and Lewis, 1971, 294).

Water was released from the hushing tanks via sluices controlled by gates. A timber gate has been excavated from tank E (a reservoir, rather than a hushing tank) at Dolaucothi, but examples of stone gates are also known, for example from las Medulas. The water flowed down huge V-shaped sluices (see Lewis and Jones, 1970, pl. XXIIIc) to the edge of the opencast and poured over, washing all before it.

Pliny's description (xxxiii, 75) of hushing, in which he records the use of five sluices, is well known. Bird (1972, 42), however, considers that such a number would have been unlikely as a much stronger rush of water would have been achieved by using fewer sluices. Most tanks do in fact seem to have had only one, but these probably divided into numerous smaller channels as they neared the edge of the opencast. At Dolaucothi for instance, the two channels leading down from the larger tank mentioned above divide into at least eight smaller ones at the head of the opencast (Lewis and Jones, 1969, 266) though these may well have been used for ground sluicing rather than hushing.

It must also be remembered that the remains that are visible now represent the final stages of working. Obviously hushing tanks were originally situated some distance back from the edge of the opencasts, the water pouring large distances down the sluices before it reached the edge: this would have given the water more force and also meant that mining could be continued until the face of the opencast was worked back close to the hushing tank. At Dolaucothi the larger tank above Area I opencast is still 35 m (38 yd.) from the edge. Conversely, many tanks are now perched right on the lip; further use of hushing would almost certainly have resulted in their collapse into the mine. Jones and Bird (1972, 70) have found evidence in the Duerna valley of an incompletely worked site in which the tanks are placed at a much lower level than at other mines; on this basis they suggest that work on the sites began at the base of the auriferous deposit and was gradually worked back and upwards by combined hushing and ground sluicing.

At some sites, such as la Leitosa (fig. 24.10), the vast amount of unwanted material shifted by hushing has resulted in the build-up of huge

alluvial fans in the river valleys below the sites. At las Medulas, a section cut by a stream through the plain has revealed alluvial material some 30 m (32 yd.) deep that is the result of Roman exploitation of this vast mine.

Naturally, since it is a most effective way of clearing overburden, hushing was also used for prospecting: hush-gullies have been identified at las Medulas, Puerto del Palo, Braña la Folgueirosa, and Castropodame, which include both hard- and soft-rock sites. Such evidence obviously indicates unsuccessful prospecting: if it had been successful, all traces of the hush-gully would have been removed by subsequent mining to create an opencast.

The second type of primary surface mining technique was ground sluicing, involving the use of a more controlled, continuous flow of water. It could be employed in two ways: firstly and more commonly, after hushing, to wash out ore-bearing material which had been exposed by that method or, secondly, on its own, as a way of clearing overburden and washing out the ore. Identification of this technique, as with hushing, has been largely as a result of comparison with nineteenth-century mining methods. Ground sluicing, as described by Paul (1947, 151–2), involved the excavation of a shallow

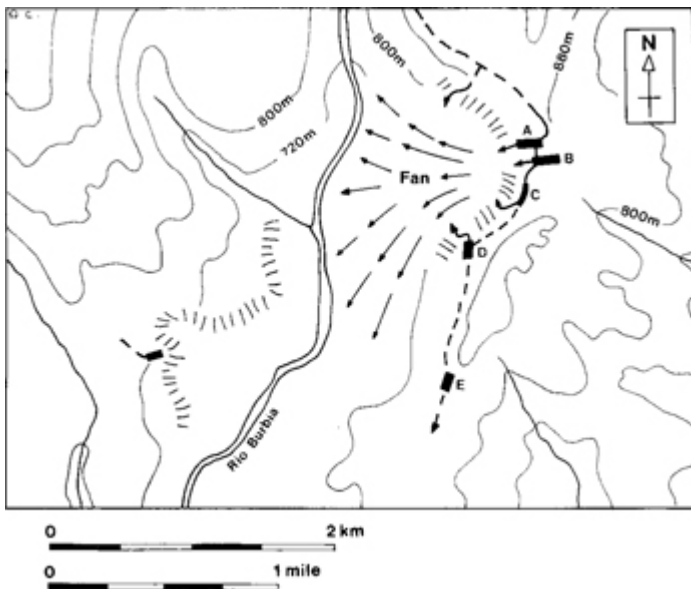


Figure 24.10 Plan of la Leitosa showing the vast alluvial fan created by the use of hushing (*after Bird*)

trench down the slope that was to be worked into which a stream of water

was directed. The miners then picked and shovelled material from the nearby paddock into the flowing water. Lighter material was washed away but heavier particles (gold in this case) settled on the bottom and could be removed later when the water supply was closed off.

As far as Roman mining techniques are concerned, the steep nature of many of the sites, particularly in north-west Spain, would have precluded any human involvement in ground sluicing and it was probably achieved by relying on water action alone to wash down the sought-after auriferous material. Long gully systems running down from tanks at sites such as la Leitosa and las Medulas (Bird, 1972, 57–8), sometimes crossing each other do, however, provide evidence of the use of this method.

Although few traces usually remain in the opencasts themselves, it seems safe to assume that ground sluicing was used as an adjunct to hushing and that the two methods are responsible for creating the opencasts. Obviously, these two methods overlap to a certain extent and evidence for them may be confusing, especially because the basic equipment, a tank or dam and one or more sluices, may be the same. The example from Dolaucothi, where the sluice leading from the larger hushing tank divides into eight smaller channels as it nears the opencast, has already been mentioned; it is not, by any means, a unique case.

Definite evidence has been provided by several sites in the Duerna valley (Jones and Bird, 1972, 16–2) and las Omanas (Bird, 1972, 53). At these sites, overburden is shallower and the gold-bearing deposits closer to the surface than in most of the other northern Spanish sites. After preliminary hushing to remove the top of the overburden,

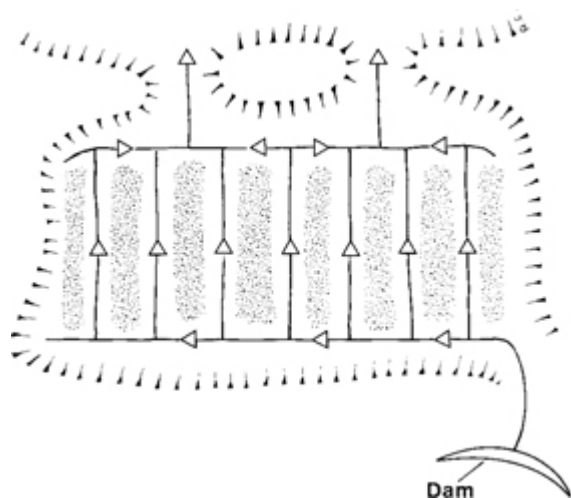


Figure 24.11 Ground sluicing as employed at various sites in the Duerna valley
(*after Bird*)

the deposits were worked back in steps by a more recognizable form of ground sluicing. At the back of each step was a leat; sluices ran down from it at regular intervals to a gully below (fig. 24.11). Water was released from a dam at the top of the site, flowed across the top leat and was channelled into the sluices, each probably being worked in turn. Ore-bearing material from the surrounding paddock would have been shovelled in, and the gold retrieved from the lower gully. Similar methods of ground sluicing have been practised in more recent times (for example, Griffith, 1960, 120–1; Peele, 1941, 10–542).

Use of this technique can result in the clearing of quite large areas down to bedrock, but evidence can often be seen on the Spanish sites in the form of large rock piles. Jones and Bird (1972, 60) have suggested that large rocks would have been removed from the sluices at an early stage; some may, however, have been left there to act as natural riffles (as described by Paul, 1947, 152) behind which the gold could collect. Either way, these mounds, composed of rocks extracted at some stage from the sluices, are characteristic of many of the sites in north-west Spain and prove that ground sluicing was used.

At a few other sites, signs of other mining techniques can be detected. These are, as yet, isolated examples but as such provide more proof that the mining methods employed by the Romans were devised in response to the different conditions, both geographical and geological, of the sites they were exploiting. At Fucochicos (Jones and Bird, 1972, 71–3), also in the Duerna valley, there is a large horseshoe-shaped opencast with an aqueduct leading to it, but no traces of any tank or dam are to be seen. A ridge of alluvial material, 4 m (4.4 yd) high, follows the shape of the opencast (fig. 24.12); water was channelled between this ridge and the face of the opencast, thus undercutting the cliff. The water would also have washed debris through to the end

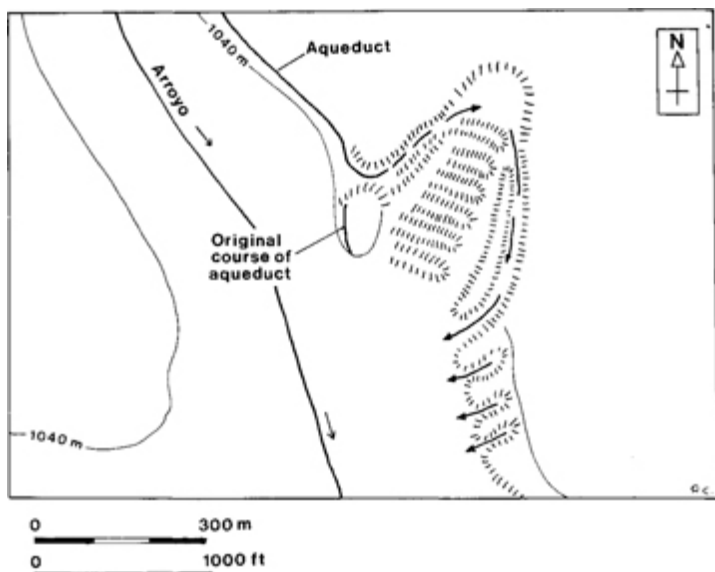


Figure 24.12 Plan of Fucochicos where a channel of water was used to undercut the cliff (*after Jones and Bird*)

of the channel between the ridge and face where the gold would have been removed, presumably by sluicing.

It appears that at at least one site, Montefurado in the Sil valley ([fig. 24.13](#)), there is some evidence for the damming and diversion of the river so that the auriferous stream-placer deposits in the exposed riverbed could be extracted. It has been suggested (Lewis and Jones, 1970, 171–4) that at this site a tunnel was cut to work a hard rock vein deposit; later the river was diverted through the tunnel, thus cutting off a loop in the river from which gold could be mined. As yet there is no irrefutable proof and nothing at the site is dateable; it is, however, the only site where there is sufficient evidence even to propose the use of such a method and it seems not unreasonable to expect that the Romans employed such a technique: they clearly had the required technical competence.

Finally, secondary mining techniques should be mentioned. In this category are included such methods as the use of washing tables, sluice boxes, perhaps even panning: that is, all the methods that were used to extract ore-bearing material either after it had been washed out by hushing and ground sluicing or, of course, after it had been obtained by the underground mining methods described earlier: the methods for finally collecting and concentrating the ore are applicable to mined material from both hard and soft-rock deposits.

As previously mentioned, such methods are practicable because most ores are heavy and will settle out of flowing water while lighter waste will be carried away. Unfortu-

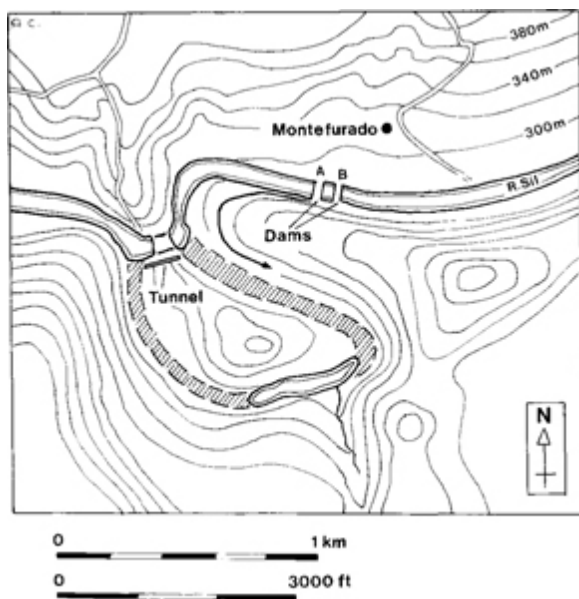


Figure 24.13 Montefurado, where the river may have been diverted through the tunnel in order to facilitate mining of the river bed thus exposed (*after Lewis and Jones*)

nately, except in the case of stepped washing tables cut into the ground, actual evidence for the use of these methods is virtually non-existent and again reliance must be placed on analogy with more recent mining methods, particularly those of the nineteenth-century gold rushes.

Stepped washing tables, connected to a water supply have, nevertheless, been identified at several sites, notably Dolaucothi (Lewis and Jones, 1969, 256–8; Jones and Lewis, 1971, 294) and Braña la Folgueirosa (Bird, 1972, 43). When cut into the ground, they represent an extension of ground sluicing techniques, the same technique in fact, on a smaller and more precise scale, employed to extract the ore particles after most of the gangue has been washed away by hushing and ground sluicing or removed by crushing.

Although no actual remains have been found, it is to be expected that wooden sluice boxes (fig. 24.14) or long toms (fig. 24.15) were also constructed. As with other sluicing techniques, the heavier ore particles are caught behind the riffles and unwanted material is washed away. Pliny

makes it clear that the Romans were familiar with sluicing techniques and although his description (xxxiii, 76) seems to refer more specifically to the use of stepped sluices or washing tables cut into the ground, both types were probably used.

In summary, the mining techniques employed by the Romans were, in almost every instance, the most appropriate for the type of deposit being worked: they were adapted

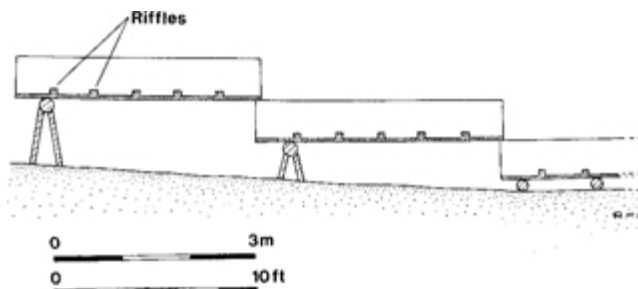


Figure 24.14 Wooden sluice boxes as employed in modern mining (*after Griffith*)

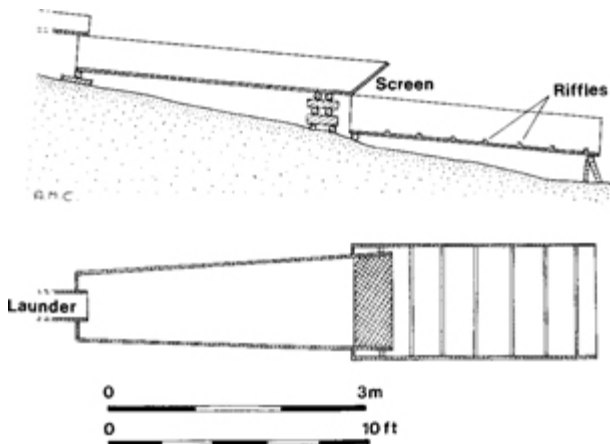


Figure 24.15 Another type of washing table, called a long torn, used in modern mining (*after Griffith*)

to the site rather than to the particular mineral being sought. Although it is generally believed that they had little geological knowledge, they were obviously aware of the problems created by various environments and adapted their mining methods accordingly. While not denying their achievements in underground mining, particularly in dealing with drainage problems, their surface techniques are probably of greater importance : the size and extent of these workings, in both hard- and soft-rock deposits, and

the engineering and organization involved, first, in providing the water necessary for the methods used in their exploitation and, second, in actually carrying out these techniques on such a vast scale, must rank as one of the most outstanding, if relatively unglamorous, achievements in the ancient world. It is worth remembering that many of the sites mined during the period of Roman domination, particularly in northwest Spain, have not been worked since: few subsequent civilizations have had the expertise to exploit these sites at all, let alone on anything like the scale achieved during the first and second centuries.

· TRADE · WITHIN · THE · EMPIRE · AND · BEYOND · THE · FRONTIERS ·

A. J. Parker

Trade was regarded as ungentle by the land-owners and literati of ancient Rome, just as it was by the aristocracy and gentry of more recent times. The ownership of land lay at the centre of the traditional Roman view of society and status, as may be seen in the census qualifications required for membership of the governing classes ([Part 9](#)). However, the use of land was not confined to recreation or feeding the owner's household ; profits, whether from rents or from the sale of produce, were intentionally sought, with the aid of labour (slaves, hired labourers or tenants), agents, equipment (for processing and packaging produce), wagons and boats, etc., as appropriate. Commercial services as such were relatively undeveloped, but links of kinship or friendship between landed families in Rome and in the provinces enabled agents, servants, couriers and shippers to be called upon according to need. Such people must also have been the ostensible providers of loans and guarantees which could often have come originally from senators who remained in the background (D'Arms, 1981).

Such was the picture in the second and first centuries BC. The officers' share of the profits of Roman conquests was devoted in part to the production and export of wine and other commodities, in part to the importation of luxury goods and works of art from overseas, particularly from Greece. Under the early Empire a different picture emerges. The pacification of the Mediterranean, and of an increasing number of outlying

areas, enabled a boom in commercial exchanges. Manufactures such as pottery, lamps or glass, many of them made at first in Italy, found their way to the furthest frontier provinces; the extremely frequent occurrence of exotic objects in both urban and rural sites throughout the Empire can only reflect a fully-developed commercial economy (Cotton, 1979; Riley, 1981). Government taxes, levied on goods which crossed a provincial boundary, were for the most part relatively light, but none the less very likely contributed to state income and indirectly to development in general (Hopkins, 1980).

On the other hand, there were limits to the freedom of trade under the early Empire (cf. Hopkins, 1983). Corn and olive oil, and on occasion wine and other goods, were obtained by imperial officials for distribution, free or at a cheap price, to citizens living at Rome. The frontier armies, even though many of their supplies were purchased for cash, rather than exacted by taxation or requisition, consumed value without contributing to investment or production (cf. Breeze, 1982). Land-owners, especially in Africa, grew rich through the efforts of local labourers, but returned benefits only irregularly in the form of donations to public works or feasts.

However the early imperial economy is characterized, of the vigour of general commercial activity there can be no doubt. Whether economic development was a conscious policy in the emperors' minds may be doubted, though they were, of course, constantly asked by communities or individuals to help provide facilities. Usually one assumes that any imperial involvement in building roads, bridges or harbours, especially in the newer provinces, was strategic in intent; however, the same developments could not but favour trade. Thus, Lyons (Lugdunum) grew within two decades from practically nothing in c. 30 BC to be, not only the seat of Augustus' administration in Gaul, but also a busy commercial and manufacturing city (Walker, S., 1981; Lasfargues *et al.*, 1976). At Bordeaux, Cologne, Avenches, and elsewhere, inland ports were constructed in this period, a remarkable development of transport facilities, whether imperially inspired or not (Drinkwater, 1983 ; Anon., 1984; Bonnet, 1982).

In the Mediterranean region, on the other hand, the story of Roman imperial trade perhaps begins rather with the suppression of the pirates by Pompey in 67 BC, which, after a period of civil war, was followed by a lasting peace; two fleets, with headquarters at Misenum and Ravenna, kept piracy at bay until at least the third century AD. All on board a ship from Alexandria, standing in to Puteoli late in Augustus' reign, justifiably cheered the old emperor and said that he was responsible for their prosperity.

The largest ships were, of course, those engaged in the transport of bulky goods, such as grain, wine, or, in some cases, stone. The involvement of emperors (by command) or senators (by agents) in such shipments would likely produce the guarantees needed to assemble them. Both the stakes, and the losses or winnings, of investment in bulk cargoes were high, as it seems from the fictional Trimalchio's experience in the mid-first century AD. Such large risks may have been the exception, for, in the case of olive oil, grain, and other cargoes in the imperial period, evidence exists that the goods of several merchants were loaded aboard. Naturally, too, small consignments, for example drinking-glasses, pins, or metal ingots, are attested archaeologically even on board ships carrying a main bulk cargo of more than 400 tons. None the less, the number of large cargoes, predominantly of one commodity, distinguishes the hellenistic and imperial period in Mediterranean shipping from earlier and later periods. Probably, too, the Mediterranean must be pictured in those periods as dotted with thousands of sails: both the number of shipwrecks discovered by divers, and the casual nature of ancient references to travel by ship, indicate that traffic was generally frequent and, on important routes, intense (Casson, 1970).

The result, as archaeological finds testify, is a scene of vigorous commercial exchange; from Caesarea in Palestine to Pompeii in Italy or Londinium in Britain, imported lamps, pottery, glass and metalware are found in significant quantity. Obviously some people, and some sites, were better able than others to acquire the goods they desired. In the Mediterranean regions, Roman colonies, such as Knossos or Corinth, with their population of well-off settlers, tend to produce an especially wide range of imported objects (cf. Wright, 1980); in the frontier provinces, army garrisons, and their associated settlements, as well as commercial centres such as London, had inhabitants with similarly cosmopolitan tastes. But such places also served as centres through which objects were traded with barbarians beyond the frontier; Toulouse, for example, in the first century BC evidently constituted a centre for the export of Italian wine to Gaul (Tchernia, 1983), and this was true also of Cologne and Aquincum in the Empire (Kunow, 1980). The effects of romanization can be seen in the distribution of trade goods beyond the imperial frontier (cf. Todd, 1975, 3 5–42); there is, in northern Europe, a strip about 200 km (125 miles) wide in which Roman pottery, ornaments, and even coins were clearly in regular use. Further afield, more 'prestigious' items were in demand by chiefs, who, to judge from literary and other non-archaeological evidence, collected skins, amber, slaves, etc. from their people (Hedeager, 1978). In

some cases Roman goods may have been gifts, made in exchange for tribal friendship or the supply of troops; in others, Roman objects might have been plundered from frontier settlements, or, more likely exacted as tolls or protection money from traders and caravans (cf. Al-Ansary, 1982). In any case, Roman goods which found their way to these economically less-developed societies had a social and political function which went well beyond their use in the Roman imperial state.

Within the Empire, the most important trade was certainly that in grain. Large quantities of wheat were constantly on the move, sometimes for great distances. At Rome, anyway, the acknowledged objective of free or rationed corn distribution was to ensure *quies*, good order (Rowland, 1976). The avoidance of shortages and the prevention of price increases were obviously vital, especially as many inhabitants of imperial Rome were essentially unemployed, and there was no public cash relief. By constructing granaries, and having officials who were responsible for keeping them full, the emperors gradually took the staple of the citizens of Rome out of the hands of merchants, so that 'corners' could not be made. In the provinces, governors acted similarly, if they could; in Pisidia, for example, about AD 93 the governor took measures to force merchants not to hoard corn at a time of shortage but to bring it out for sale, and also fixed a maximum price (McCrum and Woodhead, 1961, no. 464). Even here it may have been principally the city of Antioch that was thus protected; in times of famine, countryfolk had to eat what they could find.

The imperial system refrained from taking over the supply of the capital altogether; although regulations were made affecting the principal supply routes (e.g. from Alexandria to Rome, by the Flavian period, four months' supply in each year came to Rome from Egypt), the actual provision of corn and of ships was normally left to merchants and shippers (Rickman, 1980). In the early Empire, shippers were left free agents, albeit sometimes rewarded by inducements (Rouge, 1966, 465-74; Pomey and Tchernia, 1978). In the late Empire, a more centralized system was operated in the west, especially after the foundation of Constantinople, to which Egyptian grain was diverted; a tax in kind was now regularly collected and will normally have produced a surplus from provinces such as Sicily or those in north Africa. Shippers, too, were required by imperial edict to undertake regular voyages with corn.

The corn trade is the principal example of trade which was regular, often long-distance, and involved large quantities. Another example is that of preserved fish and fish-sauce. In the Mediterranean region, fish, both fresh and preserved, and fish-sauce were a normal part of the diet, at any rate in

places within reach of the sea. Dried or salted fish, processed in quite distant regions where fish of appropriate kinds were plentiful, was a convenient object of trade for supplying distant cities. 'Bread and sauce' were the two elements of a Greek dinner, the sauce normally being understood as fish, and such was the usual diet of ordinary people in Roman times, too. Tunny was a favourite salt fish; it was caught and processed in Bithynia, Africa, Baetica and elsewhere. Archaeological evidence from the Roman period suggests that mackerel and sardines were also widely consumed; mackerel from the south coast of Spain, and sardines from the southern and central parts of Lusitania, were transported in *amphorae*, common in the first century AD, less frequent in later centuries. Romans also had a passion for salty sauces made by steeping fish in vats packed with salt. The sauces, which went by various names such as *garum* or *allec*, were used in cooking or as a condiment at table; greatly in demand by gourmets at Rome, they were also consumed widely in the frontier provinces, where they may have served a dietary need, but certainly provided a tang of home, or of high life. The distribution of first-century southern Spanish fish-sauce *amphorae* reflects this; they are found particularly in Roman garrisons in Germany and Britain, and also to some extent in civil settlements of the period. It would be absurd to suppose that fish sauce was supplied in response to some kind of official order, or a regular arrangement for ordering soldiers' rations; it can only have been bought, supposedly as a relatively expensive commodity, by those with money, who at this time were principally the soldiers. Here, then, is an example of long-distance trade stimulated, as far as can be told, purely by the consumers' demand.

The conditions of southern Spain and Portugal were obviously particularly favourable for fish-preserving and sauce-making; plentiful fish and ample sunshine made production simple. However, the distance from the Mediterranean to the northwest frontiers must have made Spanish fish sauce expensive, and it is thus no surprise to find that in the second and third centuries AD fish-sauce factories were set up in Brittany, and even in London (Galliou, 1983, 125–35; Bateman and Locker, 1982). As with manufacturing industries (p. 643 below), the trend was for production gradually to move towards the consumer. In some cases (e.g. *terra sigillata*) this may have been due to a decline or collapse in the production centres; in Lusitania, however, if not other parts of Spain, fish preserves were still being exported to Mediterranean consumers as late as the first decades of the fifth century AD. Therefore the reason for the decline in provincial finds, which is marked from the end of the first century AD,

must be a drop in demand for the exotic product. However, the provincialization of the culture of the frontier provinces in the third and fourth centuries affected this trade, too; fish-sauce merchants (*negotiatores allecarii*) are recorded on inscriptions of the late second and early third centuries from the shrines of Nehalennia at the old mouth of the Rhine, but after c. 275 there is little evidence of any kind for this trade outside the Mediterranean region (cf. Hassall, 1978).

Within the Mediterranean region, fish sauce was produced almost everywhere. In the first century AD in Pompeii, fish products were imported from southern Spain, but there was also a local industry; Pompeian fisheries had a certain repute, and some Pompeian fish-sauce jars, a distinctive type of narrow-necked flagon, have been found at Rome, but they are almost completely unknown elsewhere. Such industries existed in many coastal areas, but only in special circumstances can they have exported much. A rather different picture emerges in the case of two other Mediterranean products, wine and olive oil. Although both are thought of as characteristic of Mediterranean agriculture, their production on an economic, as opposed to a household, scale was localized, at least, in the early Empire. Moreover, for whatever reason, viticulture and wine making spread slowly to areas such as Gaul, and olives remained at all times a specialized crop.

Wine that was good enough to travel had been shipped in *amphorae* from Syria, Greece, Etruria, Carthage and elsewhere from pre-classical times onwards. In the third century BC, exports from Campania, Latium, Etruria, and possibly from Spain began to assume a noticeable frequency, to judge from finds of so-called Graeco-Italic *amphorae* (Will, 1982). From the mid-second century onwards, great quantities of Italian wine were exported, to Africa, Spain, and, above all, to Gaul, in *amphorae* of Dressel form 1, strongly made and securely stopped and sealed to stand up to long-distance carriage (pl. 25.1). Much of this wine was of fine quality, such as the Caecuban wine lost in the wreck of la Madrague de Giens (pl. 25.1) in the period 60–35 BC; it came from vineyards in southern Latium, and the corks were sealed with merchants' marks to authenticate the contents (Tchernia *et al.*, 1978). The *amphorae* from this site do not preserve their painted labels, but finds elsewhere show that the estate, the variety of grape, and the date were often indicated, just as they are on a modern good-quality wine label. Roman and Italian land-owners doubtless took pride in the production of fine wine, but they also regarded its sale as a valuable source of profit. Substantial investment was of course required, not only in the land, equipment and staff needed to produce the wine, but also in ships

and even harbours; although such affairs are largely concealed by Roman gentlemanly reticence, there is little doubt that rich, landed families such as the Sestii of Cosa were involved, often through servants or agents, in all aspects of wine export (D'Arms, 1981; Will, 1982).

Surprisingly, this trade seems not to have survived on any scale into the Empire. During the first part of Augustus' reign, Italian amphora-makers changed from the traditional Dressel form 1 to a lighter, more economical form, the Dressel 2-4. This form, which imitated the Greek *amphorae* of Cos, began to be made, not only in Italy, but also in Spain and Gaul, and, in the first century AD, it is *amphorae* from the provinces at least as much as from Italy which are found in wrecks and on land (Tchernia, 1980; Arthur, 1982). Several explanations can be advanced for this change; one must be the peaceful conditions of the Augustan period, which permitted free competition between production areas, but it may also be that, for unrecorded reasons, Italian producers ceased to make the high-tannin wines, chemically similar to modern claret, which had been bottled in the Dressel 1 *amphorae* and commanded a market as far afield as Britain and Palestine in the first century BC. Besides Spanish and Gallic wine, Rhodian wine *amphorae* are also found in mid-first century AD provincial sites, showing that consumers were still prepared to meet the cost of transporting wine from distant areas of production. However, during the late first and the second centuries, wine production spread northwards through Gaul, and Gallic *amphorae* and Rhenish barrels form the archaeological record of wine imports to Britain. In the later period, wine was still transported around the eastern Mediterranean region in *amphorae*, but in most of the western provinces drinkers seem to have relied more on local products - at Rome, Italian wine, and, in the frontier provinces, very probably mostly beer (Whitehouse, 1981; Boon, 1974c, 286).

Whereas wine remained an unessential, albeit enjoyable, ingredient of life, olive oil must have seemed indispensable, since it was used not only for cooking but also for lighting and personal hygiene. In the first, second and third centuries AD there is scarcely a site, no matter how humble, in the western provinces which has not produced at least one sherd of the Spanish oil amphora, Dressel 20 (fig. 25.1). From archaic Greek times onwards, *amphorae* used for olive-oil transport were made of coarse, porous clay and had a generally bulky, rounded shape; such were the Apulian and Tripolitanian *amphorae* of the first century BC, and so were the Baetican Dressel 20. No certain example of this form exists earlier than the closing years of the first century BC, yet by the Claudian period they were being widely exported (Colls *et al.*, 1977). At Rome, Spanish oil jars,

broken and dumped after decanting, form a large proportion of the Monte Testaccio, a great mound of sherds near the Tiber quays; there are indeed Tripolitanian and other *amphorae* in the Testaccio as well, but, in the mid second century, a period whose remains have been particularly thoroughly examined, Spanish *amphorae* were certainly the most

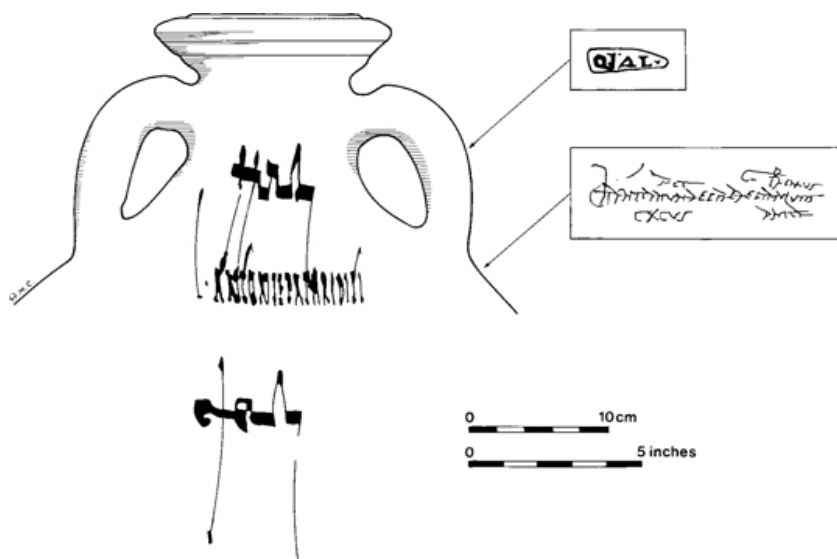


Figure 25.1 Olive-oil *amphora* with stamped and painted inscriptions giving the manufacturer and merchant, and dated to the mid-second century. Found in a shipwreck off the south of France (after Liou and Callender)

numerous. In this period, perhaps the peak of prosperity at Rome, care was taken to secure a regular supply of good quality oil; imperial agents were stationed both in Baetica and at Ostia to arrange shipping contracts.

The extensive spread of Baetican oil exports is documented not only by anonymous sherds but also by the stamps, which were applied, apparently on a minority of *amphorae*, by potters as a maker's mark. The stamp illustrated (fig. 25.1), Q.I.A.L., was found in a mid-second century AD shipwreck at l'Anse Saint-Gervais, Fos-sur-Mer (ancient *Fos-sae Marianae*, at the canalized mouth of the Rhone). In the same cargo were similar *amphorae*, stamped L.S.A.R. These stamps, which must represent the abbreviated name of the owner of the pottery, with an added initial or control mark, have been found in Baetica itself, at Rome (several examples), at Aries, Orange and Vienne in Southern Gaul, at Heddernheim in Germany, and at Wroxeter in Britain - a typical distribution for Spanish olive-oil *amphorae* (Callender, 1965, nos 923 d and 1460b). Those in the

Saint Gervais shipwreck still bear their painted labels; the illustration shows (a) xxcvs 185½ pounds, the weight of the empty *amphora*; (b) L. ANTONI EPAPHRODITI: the oil merchant responsible for shipping the oil, Lucius Antonius Epaphroditus; (c) cxcvs: 195½ pounds, the weight of the oil - 64 kg, i.e. 71.3 l (15½ gal) of oil; (d) *ac(cepi)t gprimus charitianum aeliae aelian(ae) luiis cxcus anice[t(us)]*: 'received by Primus, oil from the Charitianus farm, owner Aelia Aeliana; 57½ [unexplained]; 195½ (pounds) weighed by Anicetus'. Other *amphorae* in the same cargo were also shipped by Antonius Epaphroditus, but contained oil from a different estate; there was also some oil shipped by Antonius Melissus and Antonius Peregrinus, who may have been freedmen in the service of the same house as Antonius Epaphroditus. Documents such as these show how much of western imperial trade was run on a family basis; the family might be based in Baetica, or southern Gaul, but a son or a trusted freedman would be posted to Ostia or Rome to act at the far end of the main despatch route (Liou, 1980).

The trade goods so far discussed have been bulky and heavy, and consignments took up most or all of a ship. Smaller consignments might be added, by the shipper or by individual crewmen, to use up space, and in some cases, logically enough, these could be of goods which complemented the main cargo. Thus, ships bearing a wine cargo sometimes carried drinking cups as well, especially where, as in Campania in the third and second centuries BC, high quality pottery was made in the same area as the wine (Morel, 1981). In the wreck at la Madrague de Giens (p. 639 above) there have been found numerous coarse-ware pots, including over 200 vessels in a red ware made, like the main cargo of wine *amphorae*, in Italy (pl. 25.1). However, small consignments of this kind need not have been loaded in their area of origin, but were doubtless often acquired from dealers at the quayside or direct from other ships in port. Thus, aboard the ship wrecked at la Madrague de Giens, there were more than 300 cups and other vessels of black-gloss ware, many of them apparently of non-Italian, albeit western, fabric (Morel, 1981, 64 and 96). The point remains, though, that much of the impetus towards trade in Roman manufactured goods was due, not merely to the political and other background situation of the late Republic and early Empire, but also to the spread of Roman customs and the demand from provincial subjects for both the consumable supplies and the equipment which such customs required. Such must also be true of oil-lamps. The glossy, red, moulded pottery lamps made in Italy in the first and second centuries AD are found at most provincial sites, at least in forts and towns; the use of such lamps to burn imported olive oil, while it may have

been more pleasant and efficient than that of locally-produced dips or candles, must have been rather expensive and due principally to a desire to be 'stylish' (Bailey, 1974). In any case, whole cargoes of lamps are unknown; the largest known consignment, from which 2,300 lamps have been recovered (though there were certainly more on board originally), from a ship wrecked at Gruissan in southern Gaul c. AD 130, can have been only a complement to the other cargo, including *mortaria*, of what was apparently a large vessel (Solier *et al.*, 1981, 85–114). For such complementary or 'piggy-back' consignments to be worthwhile, a regular flow of bulk goods was obviously necessary. In the case of fine-wall pottery drinking cups, made in southern Spain and exported in small numbers to pre Flavian sites in Britain and elsewhere, the substantial movement of olive oil and fish sauce provided opportunity for some cases of pottery to find their way to retailers in the far-off provinces (Greene, 1979, 134ff.). Clearly, such trade was threatened, not only by decline in demand or a crisis among suppliers, but also by any change or interruption to the 'host' traffic. At all events, neither Italian lamps nor Spanish cups reached the frontier regions for long; by the third century, if not before, most British homes must have been using locally made lights, as imported pottery lamps are practically unknown, and many types of pottery and glass drinking cups supplanted cups from the south from the late first century on. By contrast, oil-lamps were made and used, often in huge numbers, in the Mediterranean region throughout antiquity; though many were of local origin, some centres (such as Cnidus) exported special types of lamp, and in the case of Africa (if not elsewhere) both tableware and lamps found widespread buyers (see below).

In the case of the manufactured goods so far discussed, distinctive characteristics and circumstances of discovery indicate the place of production, and thus permit the movement of goods to be traced from findspots. Advances in archaeological techniques have already enabled many types of pottery or *amphorae* to be ascribed to a source, and much work of this kind remains to be done (Peacock, 1977). Some classes of object, however, are harder to identify in these ways; most metals, and also glass, may include no characteristic elements related to their origin, and glass in particular was normally made with at least some recycled material. In the case of oil-lamps, the very method of manufacture, using a pattern to create moulds from which the actual lamps were made, not only limited the opportunity for distinctive marks to be applied by the potter but also encouraged imitation and 'pirate' production (Bailey, 1976). Thus, lamps such as the widespread type of plain lamps bearing the mark FORTIS must

have originated from many points of production which makes discussion of such industry and its products of limited value in present circumstances (Bailey, 1980, 96 and 275; but cf. Harris, 1980a). Moreover, not only were products imitated, but producers often set up branch factories, travelled about, or even migrated, taking their designs and even their actual moulds with them. Such migration of production is a recurrent and significant theme in the period of the Empire. Three examples are the production of *terra sigillata*, glass vessels, and *mortaria*.

The red-gloss ware of central Italy, generally known as arretine ware, began to be made at Arezzo in Etruria in the decade following 50 BC (Goudineau, 1968). The finest products (pl. 23.6) were elegant, moulded cups and jugs, with decoration created by modelling punches in the shape of figures and floral patterns which were impressed into the mould from which the body of the cup was made. Plain vessels were, of course, made in great numbers and exported, but even figured pieces occasionally turn up in the provinces (e.g. Brown, 1968, no. 25). The factories of the arretine masters such as Marcus Perennius (fig. 25.2) were at first established at Arretium, or not far away; by 15 BC, however, workshops were set up nearer the coast, at Pisa (which was on the



Figure 25.2 Map showing the development of samian factories (*after Marsh*)

sea in antiquity), presumably to make export to Gaul easier, and, indeed, by the same period at least one master, Cnaeus Ateius, had opened a branch at Lugudunum in Gaul (fig. 25.2). The political and commercial importance of Lugudunum, and its relative closeness to the frontier areas where high-quality wares were in demand, must be the explanation. Thereafter the chief exporting centres of red-gloss pottery were, in turn, southern Gaul in the first century, La Graufesenque and Montans; Central Gaul in the late first and second centuries, Lezoux, Les Martres-de-Veyre, etc., and then eastern Gaul, Trier, Blickweiler and Rheinzabern, in the late second and early third centuries. This rise and fall of successive producers may have been due, not to changes in the requirements of the distant customers, but to a decline in demand close to the factory for high-quality pottery (Marsh,

1981); however, the general trend, outwards towards the regions where fine wares of this kind were infrequently made, fits the picture of a centrifugal movement seen in other industries.

Such an industry was the manufacture of vessel-glass. Drinking cups and other vessels, made by the traditional cast-and-ground technique, but in increasing number and, doubtless, cheapness, were produced in the first century BC in the eastern Mediterranean region (Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt); however, archaeological finds, especially at Rome, show that production spread also to Italy by the last quarter of the century - doubtless in response to the Augustan Peace (Grose, 1977). Meanwhile, in Syria and Palestine, a revolutionary innovation, that of blowing glass vessels, took place apparently in this period. Free-blown glasses are hard to group or attribute; however, during the Augustan period some Sidonian glass-makers used moulds to shape their blown vessels. They often included their signature in the mould, and that of Ennion is especially well known (pl. 25.2). Since many glasses signed by Ennion have been found in the area of Aquileia, it is likely that Ennion either established a branch at Aquileia, or, more likely, moved there from Sidon; Aquileia was well placed to supply markets, not only in the Po Valley, but also across the Julian Alps in the Danube provinces. These migrations continued during the first century AD, and, by Flavian times, glass-making had probably spread throughout most of the western provinces. The qualities of blown glass were exploited especially in Germany and northern Gaul, notably at Cologne; from this area comes a class of long-necked jugs, their precise origin unknown, but found only in central and northern Gaul, Germany and Britain (pl. 25.3). These accomplished products show how rapidly provincial schools could develop in response to demand.

The identification of production centres and trade patterns is made more difficult by the fact that craftsmen may have been peripatetic. Jewellers, mosaicists, metalworkers and even glass-makers could have carried their materials about with them, or reworked customers' scrap; potters and tilers, too, could have set up away from home in many circumstances. Even so, where a special quality or finish of the product was required, there were advantages in working at a single site, where the right materials and fuel were to hand. This was so with *mortaria* - large, heavy bowls for general kitchen use; a good *mortarium*, resistant to wear or breakage, could evidently find a buyer even at a long distance from the kiln, and the frequent use of prominent stamps with the maker's name (at least on *mortaria* of the mid-first to mid-second centuries) suggests that a good factory could soon acquire a reputation. Thus, in the mid-first century AD,

mortaria, some from Rome and others from Aoste found their way to the north-west frontier regions (Hartley, 1973a; 1973b). Once more, a series of migrations took place; in the Neronian-Flavian period, by several masters including two with the name Quintus Valerius from northern Gaul to south-east Britain; again in the second century from midland to north-east Britain by the master Sarrius (Hartley, 1977a). In these examples, there is no doubt that the potters actually shifted operations; the incentive must, again, have been to get closer to reliable markets (Hartley, 1975). Moreover, as with glass-making, the wares of provincial manufacturers soon became predominant; by the end of the second century, few *mortaria* were being imported to Britain. The chief exception was a number of large vessels of distinctive shape, made in Germany and shipped by sea to London for distribution; the product itself, and the ease of delivery, in this case overcame the disadvantage of distance (Hartley, 1977b; Haupt, 1981). Elsewhere in the Roman world, Roman and Italian *mortaria* enjoyed similar appeal in the early Empire (Riley, 1981), but cooks seem to have made do, as time went by, with less robust bowls of ordinary coarse fabric. A curious exception is found in the stamped *mortaria* made at Ras el-Basit on the Syrian coast (fig. 25.3). In the third and early fourth centuries, potters who applied stamps, not only in Greek but also in Latin, made *mortaria* which were exported principally to southern Anatolia, Cyprus, Palestine and Egypt, despite the fact that *mortaria* are relatively rare in the Mediterranean region, and stamped examples rare anywhere, by this period. It is likely enough that the Latin stamps are earlier than the Greek (fig. 25.3), and provide, therefore, a further example of the migration of craftsmen, in this case, from west to east (Hayes, 1967).

The objects of trade so far discussed have been foodstuffs or manufactured items which ended by being bought by private individuals. In the case of 'heavy' goods, however, such as timber, stone and bricks, much never reached a shop-counter but was used by professionals (Darvill and McWhirr, 1984). Moreover, both timber and the best stone were often, especially in the Mediterranean region, in short supply, or difficult to reach and transport. Trade in such goods, therefore, was more likely to remain within the control of the highest level of economic and physical power in the state, that is, under the Empire, the emperor, and, to a lesser extent, the army.

The timber requirements of the Roman world were divided into that for long, straight pieces for ships and buildings, and that for firewood. There were also special needs, e.g. for fine woods for furniture, but these must have been small compared with the others. For firewood, fruit-tree

prunings and coppice wood from lowland estates would go a long way, but the demands of a large Roman city, for household cooking and heating, for workshop furnaces, and for the public baths, must, in prosperous periods, have outstripped normal sources of supply. For long timbers, on the other hand, it was necessary to climb the mountains of Lebanon, Cyprus, or Calabria, or bring trees from the distant European forests. Forest resources, especially of fir for warship

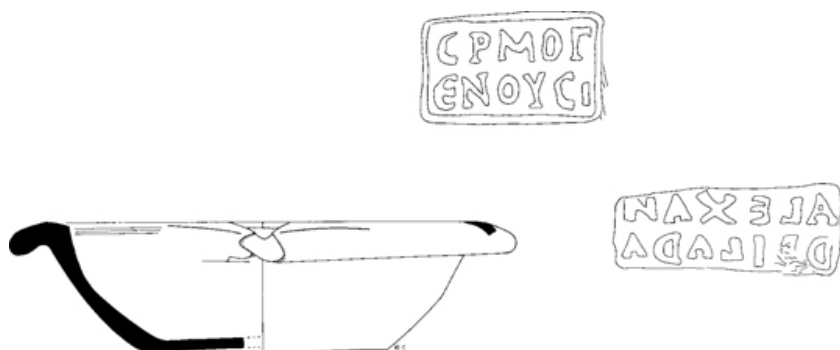


Figure 25.3 *Mortarium* manufactured at Ras el-Basit, Syria (after Hayes)

construction, had been tightly controlled by pre-Roman rulers, and the emperors, too, kept a grip on such strategic forests as the Lebanon range (Meiggs, 1982). The imperial peace reduced pressure on warship timber supplies, but increased all kinds of other demands, for merchant ships, for roof beams of public buildings, for quays and bridges, and so on. Curiously, there is no specific evidence that any Roman forests were regularly replanted, and there must have been a progressive shortage of good timber and even some deforestation of the landscape.

In the northern provinces, timber supplies were presumably less of a problem. However, the concrete and brick structures characteristic of Rome and parts of the Mediterranean provinces must have been hard to re-create in many parts of northern Europe; in Britain, at any rate, there are very few recorded brick-built buildings - bricks were used mostly for hypocausts and levelling courses - and tiled roofs are mostly a feature of the first and second centuries; in the later period, 'home-grown' stone tiles became normal instead. There is no provincial parallel for the tile industry of the city of Rome, where many of the tileries, by the mid-second century, were owned by members of the imperial family, their high-quality products identified by stamps giving full information about their origin; the tiles were used by the thousand to create a strong, fireproof skin for the great concrete public buildings of Rome and the extensive commercial and

domestic structures of Ostia (Steinby, 1981). By contrast, even one of the best-known provincial factories, at Minety, in southern Britain, produced tiles with a range of stamps which offer no explicit information; the map (fig. 25.4) shows the distribution of seven different tile-stamps, comprising the letters TPF and a further series-letter or initial (McWhirr and Viner, 1978). This is one of the most widely distributed British stamps, but, even so, detailed study of the stamped tiles suggests that not all the tiles were transported from the kilns at Minety, where some of them were certainly made, but that some were made at other sites, even at the place where a building was being erected, by a peripatetic tiler who carried his stamp around with him (Darvill and McWhirr, 1984). There was thus a diversity of modes of manufacture and distribution of these products; at one extreme, army units or local magistrates set up tileries to provide roofs for their buildings, and, at the other, individual tilers must have hawked their services round villa-owners who planned to improve or extend their property.

As already explained, fine stones, known to Romans and archaeologists as marble, but including granite, diorite, breccia, etc., were likely to be obtained and used principally by the emperor. Many marble quarries, by the second century AD, were imperial property, acquired by conquest, legacy or confiscation, though the actual extraction could be contracted to companies (Ward-Perkins, 1980; Pensabene, 1983). Imperial freedmen and slaves supervised operations, and the labour was done at least partly by condemned criminals, but there must also have been scope for free enterprise in cutting or transporting stone. The city of Simitthus in Numidia, established as a *colonia* in c. 27 BC, was peopled mostly with immigrants, attracted to the opportunity offered by exploitation

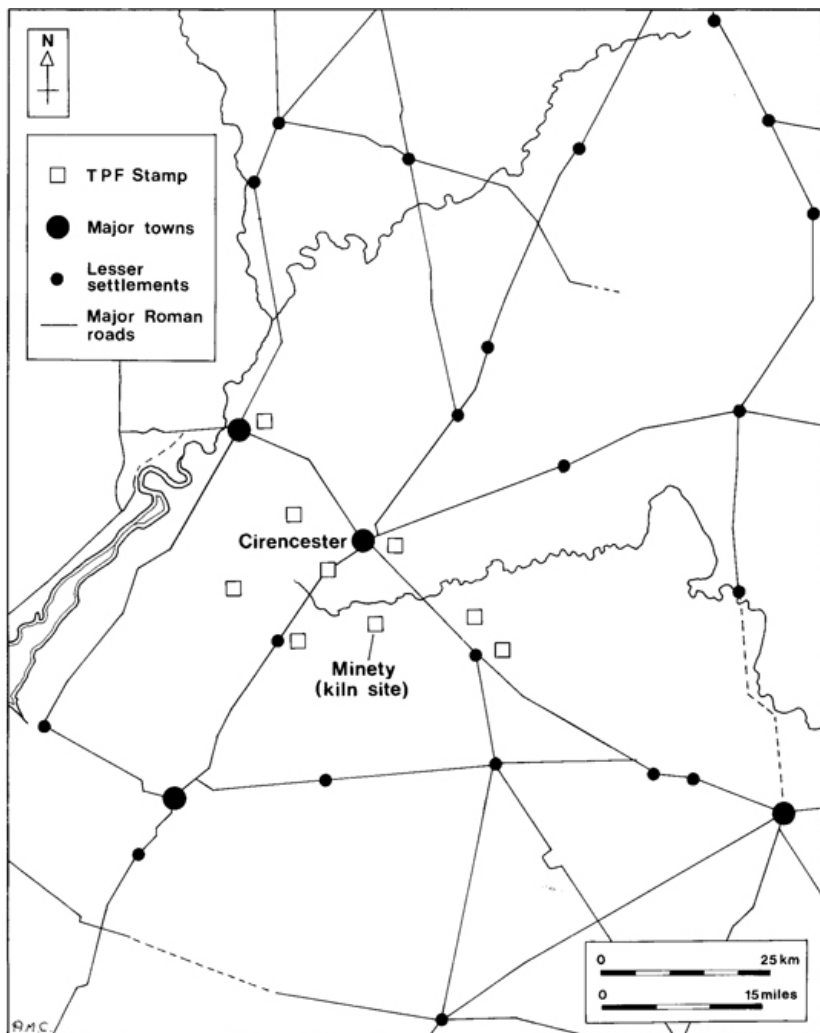


Figure 25.4 Distribution map of tiles stamped TPF in Britain (*after McWhirr and Viner*)

of the yellow marble of the Jebel Chemtou (Lassere, 1980). This marble, together with a dozen or so other kinds of white or coloured marble from Italy, Greece, Anatolia and Egypt, was eagerly sought after, not only because of its beautiful colour, but also because it was free from flaws and so could be relied on for columns and large architectural elements. It also provided useful quantities of veneers for floors and walls for which it was extensively used. A curious aspect of the marble trade was that very large quantities were cut in the late first and early-mid second centuries, but by

no means all was used at once (Ward-Perkins, 19 51; 1971). It seems as if, having set up an organization to extract and transport the stone, the emperors kept it working to provide a reserve, without paying attention to current needs. Of course, there were always opportunities for them to display generosity, by giving columns away for some new building in the provinces.

Only the base survives of a column of pink Egyptian granite which was set up to commemorate Antoninus Pius (fig. 25.5). The inscription records that the column

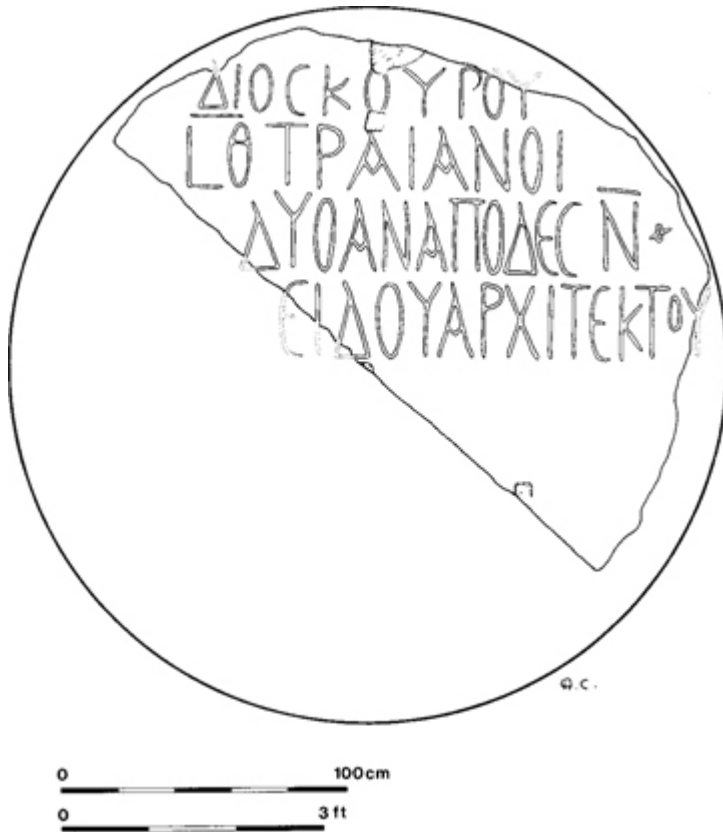


Figure 25.5 Quarry inscription on the underside of the Column of Antoninus Pius, formerly in the Campus Martius, Rome: red Egyptian granite, quarried in AD 106 (after Ward-Perkins)

was one of two, fifty Roman feet long, extracted and listed in the ninth year of Trajan's reign (AD 106) under the quarry supervisor Dioskouros and the engineer (*architektos*) Herakleides, whose name can be restored from other

quarry-marks of the same period. Something about the inscription suggests the pride which was taken in the successful extraction of this great monolith; even so, not quite the tallest column, nor yet the heaviest block, known to have been extracted and transported to Rome. It may indeed have been a 'spare', left over from the temple built at the head of Trajan's Forum, rather than just unallocated stock, but the fact that such a piece was available at all half-a-century later is an indication of the great quantity of stone at Rome. Moreover, the weight of such pieces (117 tons) testifies to the resources expended on their transportation. The columns of the porch of Hadrian's Pantheon (pl. 25.4), likewise of Egyptian granite, both pink and grey, suggest the scale, though they are mere forty-footers weighing 84 tons. The lintel of the porch, of Pentelic marble from Attica, must weigh 120 tons, which had to be hoisted into position, not just hauled upright. However, not all marble, even from imperial quarries, was restricted to such use; veneers and small pieces did find their way, presumably through some form of commercial distribution, to the provinces (e.g. Crummy, 1983, 107 and microfiche 3).

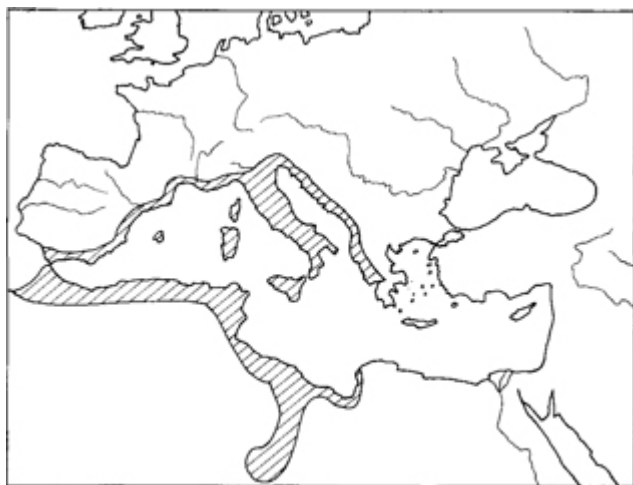
In the examples discussed so far, therefore, one can see a variety of trade patterns. Interest, naturally, focuses on distinctive, non-perishable items which travelled long distances, and are thus clearly identifiable in the archaeological record. However, many of the daily requirements of life were locally obtained, and of perishable substances. Most foodstuffs have left little trace; animal bones have been studied thoroughly only in parts of the Empire, and in any case are largely mute as to their origin; the serious collection and study of fish and bird bones and shells from Roman sites are still in their infancy. Vegetables were certainly part of most Romans' diet, as recipes and other written sources make clear, and flowers were grown and sold, not just for personal and household use, but to decorate shrines and victims at religious festivals (Loane, 1938); almost no actual remains of these survive. Household and farm implements, and pots and bowls, whether of normally perishable wood, or of iron, must also have been made for the most part locally, if not in the house or on the farm. On the other hand, items such as silverware, gems, or statuettes have been thoroughly listed and discussed, but, even if their findspot is known, they can have affected only a small minority of the population, and the extent to which they were really distributed by trade, as opposed to manufacture to order, and transport in their owner's baggage, is very uncertain.

Not all desirable materials could be found within the Empire, even at its greatest extent. A substantial frontier tax and other charges added to the considerable expenses incurred by what could be a very long and

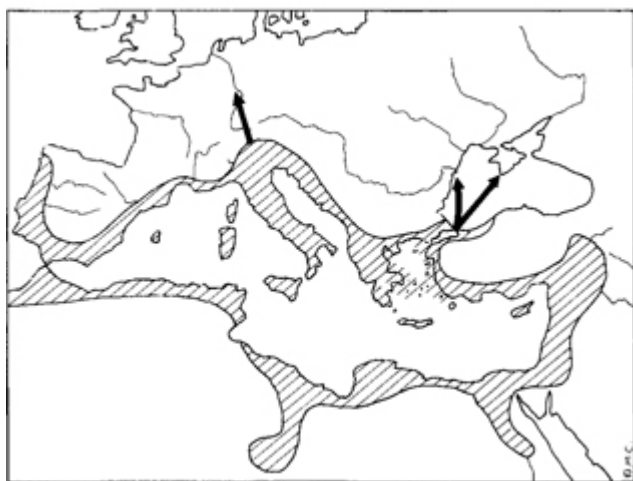
dangerous journey, with many tolls along the way, for exotic imports (Raschke, 1978, 670). Naturally, therefore, imports of this kind, at any rate those which had to come overland, tended to be of luxuries which could command a high price. Ivory, for example, was much used for statuettes and inlays; elephants and elephant tusks were well known as a symbol of Africa in general, but it seems likely that by the imperial period both ivory and perhaps animals were normally obtained from east Africa via Nubia (cf. Huntingford, 1980). Roman contact with west Africa seems to have been very limited (Sutton, 1983). The near eastern deserts, on the other hand, were themselves the source of some types of precious stones which were an ideal object of trade in such conditions, and which were crossed by caravans, at least at some periods (cf. Bowersock, 1983). Thus, the relatively fertile regions of south Arabia exported incense and myrrh, partly by ship to Egypt and thence to Rome, partly across the southern edge of the Arabian Desert and onward to Petra (Groom, 1981). A parallel kind of traffic was in amber from the Gdansk (Danzig) area of the Baltic coast, which reached Aquileia normally by an overland journey (Strong, 1966, 9–10). Roman merchants made direct contacts with native suppliers on the Baltic coast in the mid-first century AD, and it was only from then until the late second century that amber was in ample supply in the Mediterranean region. Here, as elsewhere, Roman enterprise played an important part in developing external trade, and improved navigational techniques doubtless enabled more to be carried on by sea (cf. Kunow, 1980; Raschke, 1979). Many goods, including amber, were imported in a raw state, and reworked on arrival at cities such as Aquileia and Alexandria. Gems, however, and perhaps ivory, were transported on and sold to carvers at Rome or in the further provinces. Silk, on the other hand, which had one of the longest journeys, from China via northwest India to the eastern provinces, was conveyed both as yarn and as woven fabric; expensive though it was, genuine Chinese damask was not an exorbitantly priced luxury and reached even the far north-western provinces (Crummy, 1983, 148 ; cf. Wild, 1984).

Such imports tended to be of small items; a more bulky trade was in pepper. In the Roman period, black and white pepper was obtained from the Malabar region of south India, modern Kerala (another type, 'long pepper', used in medicine, came from north-west India). Peppercorns, though light, bulk large, and must have been transported wherever possible by ship. Leaving either Muziris, on the south-west coast, or Barygaza, on the north-west coast, large, well-found Roman vessels ran before the winter monsoon and up the Red Sea to Egyptian ports, for transshipment to Alexandria and so onwards to Rome (Raschke, 1979; Casson, 1980). Here

a whole range of warehouses, the *Horrea Piperataria*, was devoted to its storage, and, perhaps, sale at the emperor's profit (Loane, 1944). The pepper warehouses, divided into courtyards containing pools of water, with their evocative, appetizing fragrance, conjure up an image of the resources which could be summoned up in imperial Rome. Just as the great marble blocks could be won from distant mountains and deserts within the Empire, so too even whole warehouses could be filled with rare goods from far beyond the frontiers; as late as AD 408, Alaric could demand 3000 pounds of pepper and 4000 silk garments (according to Zosimus, 5.41.4) as part of the city's ransom. These dramatic, exotic aspects of imported goods were picked out for political use by magistrates, and above all by the emperor himself, in the case of animals. Great numbers of animals were captured, especially in the frontier areas of north Africa and Anatolia; elephants, big cats, and ostriches were particularly valued for the fine spectacle they gave when hunted or fought in the arena, but strange beasts such as the hippopotamus were also brought for exhibition. The mosaics of several late Roman villas in Sicily vividly illustrate the almost military organization involved in rounding up the beasts and getting them rapidly by oared ship to exhibition; those involved in such a business would naturally hold a special place, especially in the ceremonial atmosphere of fourth-century Rome and Constantinople.



A



B

Figure 25.6 Marketing of late Roman pottery, as indicated by its distribution (*after Hajes*)

In any case, animals crossed the imperial frontier regularly, and in great numbers, for, especially in Africa, the *limes* to some extent followed an ecological boundary, and thus cut across transhumance routes (Fentress, 1979). The towers, gates and walls or ramparts which guarded and blocked valleys leading from lowland, winter grazing to upland, summer territories were no doubt constructed mainly to prevent disorder among drovers and infiltration by raiding bands (Part 4, Chapter 10; Brogan, 1979/80), but perhaps more deliberately to collect taxes (Fentress, 1979, 184; cf. Shaw,

1981, 59–60). Surviving tariffs show that nothing was forgotten (Fentress, 1979, 208–9), and humans, too, had their price, as importation must normally have been one of the main sources of slaves (cf. Harris, 1980b).

In general, the picture which can be drawn of Roman trade is of active but rather specialized development in the late Republic, followed by a boom under Augustus, which lasted, in some areas till the Flavian period, in others to the end of the second century. The disturbances and crises of the third century certainly affected trade, and, indeed, the very success of the economy of the early Empire might have contributed to its subsequent decline (Groenman-van Waateringe, 1983); however, by the third century, much of the long-distance traffic in manufactured goods and processed foodstuffs had already faded away. In many parts of the Empire, the later third century and the fourth century saw industries flourish which served a group of provinces, a province, or part of a province, but commercial contacts between, say, Germany and Rome were now much rarer than contacts between Germany and Britain. In the central Mediterranean, there appears to have been a move towards self-sufficiency; it seems that fourth- and early fifth-century Romans drank mostly Italian, indeed Latin, wines (Whitehouse, 1981). Against this background there stands the extraordinary success of the potters of Byzacena (North Africa), whose plates, dishes and lamps were widely traded in this period ([fig. 25.6](#)). From modest beginnings in the first century, African pottery exports became widespread in the second, but were essentially confined to the nearer coastal regions of the Mediterranean; in later centuries, however, they reached to the east Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and penetrated inland in many parts (Hayes, 1972). Simultaneously, as recent excavations at Carthage and other Mediterranean cities have shown, many eastern provincial centres were engaged in what was probably a relatively small-scale exchange of products which lasted almost until the Arab Conquest in the seventh century.

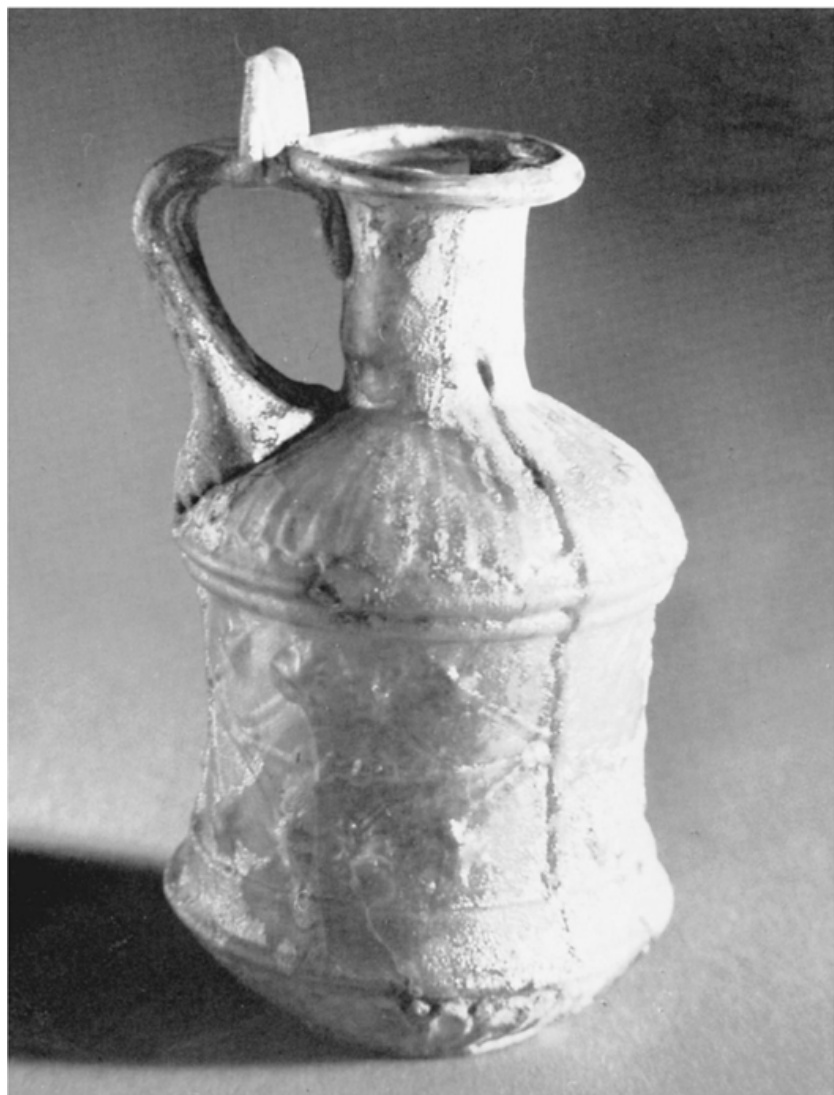


(a)

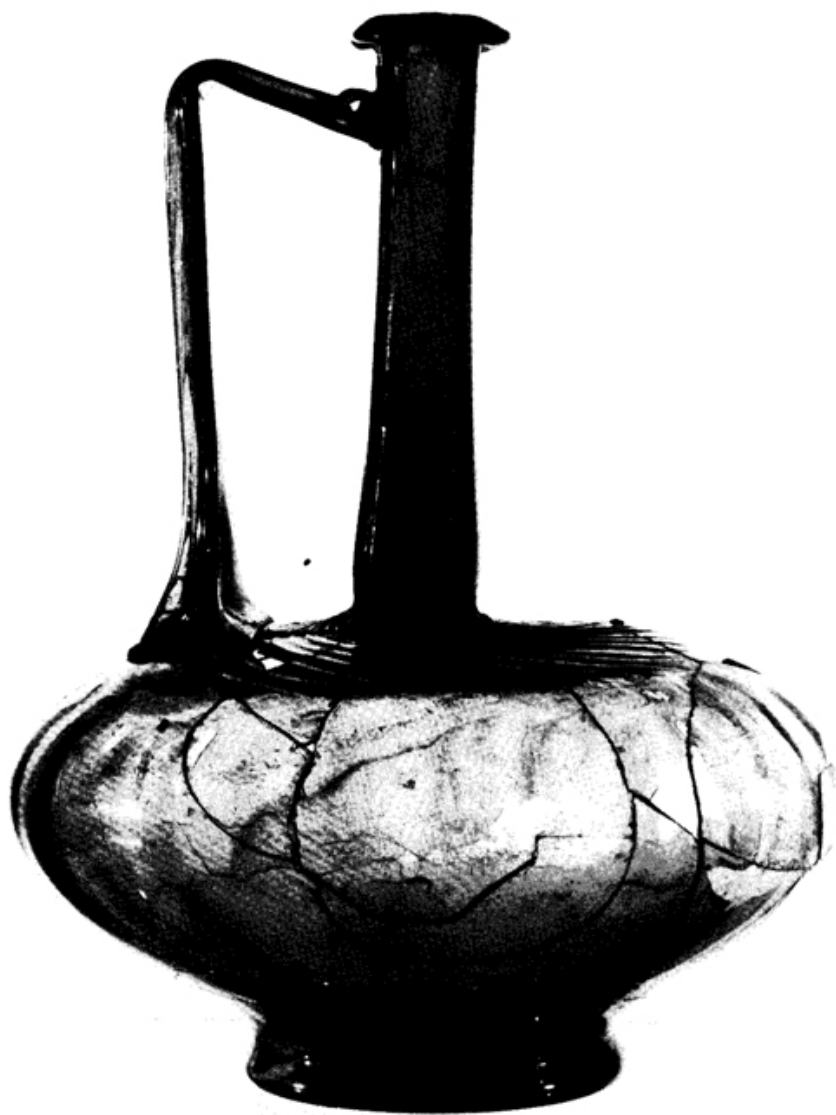


(b)

25.1 (a) and (b) The shipwreck at Madrague de Giens, southern France, with its cargo of *amphorae*



25.2 Glass jug from the workshop of Ennion



25.3 Glass jug found at Enfield (Middx.), Britain



25.4 The Pantheon, Rome, showing the size of the columns in the portico

· TRANSPORT · BY · LAND · · AND · WATER ·

Alan McWhirr

As the Roman Empire expanded the need for rapid communication between distant parts and its centre became increasingly important for good government. Events in each province needed to be known in Rome, particularly those occurring in areas where detachments of the Roman army were on duty. The efficient deployment of troops necessitated both the construction of good roads in each province, and the use of ships if the army was moved from one part of the Empire to another.

Gradually military roads came to be used by the civilian population for the movement of goods throughout the Empire. With the use of boats and an efficient road system, trade flourished and goods were often transported thousands of miles. Equally important for the economy of a region were the scores of local roads, rivers and even canals which were used to move goods to market.

The map of the Empire which can be drawn today represents a palimpsest of roads built for a variety of reasons over many centuries and it is certainly far from being a complete record of those used throughout the Empire during the period under discussion (fig. 26.1). The history and development of the road network differs in each province although it is possible to identify a number of common elements. Literary and epigraphic evidence is available for some parts of the Roman world, but its quality is variable and it is not always apparent whether these references are applicable over the Empire as a whole.

As the major road network was laid out originally to facilitate the

movement of troops the direction of roads and their mode of construction was governed by strategic considerations and by the type and volume of military traffic which was expected to use them. Later, when military rule was replaced by civilian authorities, the need to move from one settlement to another prompted new roads to be built, mainly to facilitate trade.



Figure 26.1 The principal land and sea routes of the Roman Empire

The major roads were built with care to withstand regular use by wheeled vehicles, but the main cross-country tracks, mainly used by traders, never developed into highways for general use and so no attempts were made to provide firm road surfaces. These tracks are difficult to locate and would not have been recorded on any of the official lists which were produced. As well as traders' tracks each rural settlement must have been linked to the major road network, but again by unmade roads, similar to those which linked modern farms to main roads before it became necessary to lay hard surfaces to enable bulk milk tankers to drive directly into the farm. They remain difficult to detect archaeologically.

There were, then, a number of different types of road ranging from those built by the army to military specifications, to those unmade tracks used by local populations for travelling to and from market. Such a range necessarily means that building methods varied. In addition, the materials from which they were constructed would have been dug nearby and so reflect the local soils and geology. The terrain through which roads passed

also dictated how they were built. Low-lying and marshy land frequently required a bigger causeway than usual and sometimes it was even necessary to lay down a timber framework resting on wooden piles to give support. Galen, writing in the second half of the second century AD, comments on the fact that many roads were covered in mud or flooded by rivers and that this was corrected by raising them on high embankments. Roads cut through mountains may not have required additional surfaces to make them usable by pedestrians and vehicular traffic and in such regions are often not built in straight alignments. Clearly there is no standard Roman road; they varied both in their method of construction and, despite what has been written in the past, in their width. There are, however, one or two general points which relate to road building. Where possible the most direct route was chosen giving rise to miles of straight roads, but for topographical or other reasons roads did not always adhere to such precise alignments. During construction soft material such as topsoil was dug away and a rammed base of small stone or gravel built up to the appropriate height to facilitate drainage; this height varied from one area to another. The final surface depended upon the materials available; it might have been crushed limestone, pebbles or regularly cut slabs. The edge of the road was sometimes marked by a line of kerb stones. Ditches were frequently dug adjacent to roads to help remove water, but were not always present.

The construction of roads frequently required the skills of the civil engineer to solve specific problems such as the crossing of rivers or ravines. Architects had for some time incorporated the arch into the design of buildings and so it was a natural development for it to be used in bridge building (pl. 26.1). On navigable rivers sufficient headroom had to be left to enable boats to pass beneath as well as to support the road; both could be achieved by using the arch. On wide rivers it was necessary to build piers in the river bed thus producing a multispan bridge; whenever possible, however, single span bridges were built so as to avoid this hazardous operation. The bridge at Narni which carried the Via Flaminia over the Tiber, originally had four arches; the survivor has a span of 32 m (105 ft) and an overall height of 30 m (98 ft) (White, 1984, 98). Not all bridges were built of stone as at Narni; there were many timber examples (pl. 26.2) and possibly bridges containing both stone and timber. Although undoubtedly some rivers were forded, bridges were erected when major roads crossed even quite small rivers. This can be clearly seen at Cirencester where a bridge was constructed over the river Churn outside the Verulamium Gate (Wacher, 1975, 302) to carry the road over a fairly insignificant stream.

Land surveyors, *agrimensores*, were capable of laying out the land with considerable accuracy and used surveying instruments such as the *groma*. Such surveyors were, no doubt, responsible for centuriation, but how far they became involved in surveying roads is not clear. The literary evidence for road construction is sparse. There are some details in a poem by Statius who was writing about the *via Domitiana*, a short stretch of road completed in AD 95 which ran from Mondragone in Campania to the port of Pozzuoli. In this poem Statius speaks of marking out the limits of the land required for the road with furrows and of the excavation of a trench which was in turn filled with foundation material. He also speaks of kerbing and of the many different groups of workmen involved, some cutting down trees, others working and fetching stone, lime burners and navvies. This brief literary account does no more than give a general picture; the detailed military manuals on road building which were, no doubt, produced for the army are lacking. Roads were in need of constant maintenance work and inscriptions often record the fact. A Spanish milestone dated to AD 79 notes that Vespasian 'rebuilt the *via Augusta* from Janus to the Atlantic, building new bridges and restoring old ones'. Another milestone from Moesia mentions the rebuilding and extending of the *Iter Scrofularium* by Domitian in AD 92–3 which was described as 'dilapidated by old age and the encroachment of the Danube'. Similar milestones note the repair of roads as far afield as Cyrene and the Lebanon.

A number of documents have survived in one form or another which provide information about the road network in the Empire. The Peutinger Table (*Tabula Peutingeriana*) is a medieval copy of a map found at Worms in the fifteenth century. The date of the original map is unknown, but it appears to be a late classical document. The surviving medieval scroll (*rotulus*) was 6.75 m (12 ft) long and 34 cm (13½ in.) wide and the map was produced in five colours. Although not drawn to scale it provides useful information about roads and settlements along them by including over 5 00 small 'pictures' of the settlements. The Antonine Itinerary (*Itinerarium Provinciarum Augusti Antonini*) is a much quoted work and the subject of some debate as to its origin and date. It contains 225 routes or itineraries each of which includes the starting and finishing places and a list of stopping-places along it. In addition the total mileage is given and the distance between each named place on the route. It has been noted that few of the individual *itineraria* actually take the shortest route between the two named places at the head of the itinerary. This makes it most unlikely that it represents a list of routes used by the *Cursus Publicus*. Other variations within the itinerary suggest that it was not a single compilation,

but a 'collection of journeys which were made or planned at different dates by different people' (Rivet, 1970, 67) and probably brought together during the reign of Caracalla. The itinerary also includes a short section on sea routes.

Mention has already been made of milestones which were erected along the principal roads of the Empire, and over 4,000 have been recorded. Generally these stones were cylindrical in shape and 2 m to 4 m (6½ ft to 13 ft) high. The inscription contains the name of the builder or restorer of the road and an indication of the distance travelled. In addition to the milestones there were also signposts probably made of wood. They are mentioned, for example, in an inscription found near Forum Popillii in Lucania and dated to 130 BC which speaks of building a road from Regium to Capua and placing on that road bridges, milestones and signposts.

Such a road network enabled people and goods to move freely. People walked, rode on horseback (pl. 19.3) or made use of a range of horse-drawn vehicles in order to travel, but the choice of transport for those engaged in trade depended to a great extent on the commodities they were carrying. All-purpose carts were used to move a wide range of goods, but there were also purpose-built carts such as that shown on a bas-relief from Langres in northern France which shows a solidly-built, four-wheeled waggon carrying a single large barrel for moving liquids in bulk (pl. 19.7). Large heavy loads of stone are likely to have required specially designed waggons or carts so that awkward shaped blocks could be moved from the quarry, not all of which were conveniently situated close to water to make use of boats. Pack animals were extensively used to transport goods particularly across rough terrain and their use in the Roman world has, in the past, probably been underestimated (pl. 19.6). In parts of the world today pottery is taken to market by mule or donkey without undue problems with breakage. Varro, in *De Re Rustica*, writes about trains of 'panniered asses' which traders formed to move oil, wine or grain (pl. 19.8). A wide variety of goods could have been carried by pack animals and no doubt many of the small rural craftsmen as well as the long-distance traders made use of them.

Larger operations, some of which were working on an industrial scale, needed to transport goods in quantity and this was achieved by using animals to haul waggons and carts. Oxen were used to pull heavy vehicles, and the design of such vehicles can be seen in sculptured reliefs from around the Empire (pl. 19.3). Transport by ox-drawn carts was not quick, travelling between thirty to fifty kilometres (20 to 30 miles) a day, and if long distances were involved it was almost certainly cheaper to go by sea.

There are many references to sea journeys in Roman literature and details of some of the boats that were used on these journeys can be seen on stone reliefs and mosaics. In addition the recent interest in underwater archaeology, in which wrecks have been examined, has provided further information about the type of boats used and how they were propelled. Merchant vessels were mostly powered by sail as teams of rowers would have taken up valuable cargo space. A representative selection of boats can be seen on mosaics from the Piazzale delle Corporazioni at Ostia (pl. 26.5). Roman boats were built by first laying down the keel, sternposts and stern, then the hull was made and the frames or ribs inserted. Outer timbers or 'wales' were fitted to give greater strength to the hull and a mixture of pitch and wax applied to joints. The design and position of the sails which were then added determined how the vessel could be manoeuvred and whether it could sail into the wind. It had been thought for a long time that Roman ships only carried a square rig (a single, or sometimes multiple, square sail) and, with such an arrangement, could not tack and so sail into the wind. However, it is now clear that various designs of fore-and-aft rigs were in use and this enabled them to sail closer to the wind. With such boats and good seamanship and navigation it is not surprising that a great deal of trade around the Empire involved the use of sea-going cargo vessels.

Rivers also played their part in providing a means of transporting goods. Undoubtedly sea-going vessels could enter some rivers and sail upstream to docks and wharfs such as those on the banks of the Thames at Londinium (pl. 26.3). On other occasions it may have been necessary to transfer cargo to river boats as was the case at Ostia. The extent to which shallow draught boats or barges were used to move produce around within a province is unclear. Today such boats can be seen in parts of the world carrying loads of pottery on quite small rivers and there is no reason to doubt that this happened in the Roman period. If rivers were situated conveniently close to where a commodity was being made then river transport would have been considered, but if goods had to be loaded on to carts and then taken to a river and transferred to boats, with the reverse process happening at the other end, then this would have been a costly and cumbersome exercise.

With so much maritime trade being carried out it was necessary to have ports and harbours where the boats could berth to load and unload. The recent interest in 'waterfront archaeology' has revealed a growing number of places where boats could berth. Not all places built sheltered harbours as at Ostia or Carthage, since they were not always necessary, but many docks were developed alongside rivers which were capable of receiving sea-going

vessels. The wharfs found at London and Xanten are probably typical of the many places which existed around the Empire where ships could transfer their cargoes.

Large harbours were of course built not only to meet the demand of merchants, but also as bases for the navy. Piraeus consisted, to begin with, of a naval harbour, docks and ship-sheds, but by the fourth century AD it had become the chief commercial port of Greece with many quays and warehouses. The two harbours at Carthage have in recent years been intensively studied by a multi-national team of archaeologists ([fig. 26.2](#)). The site has been identified with the Punic naval and commercial harbours which

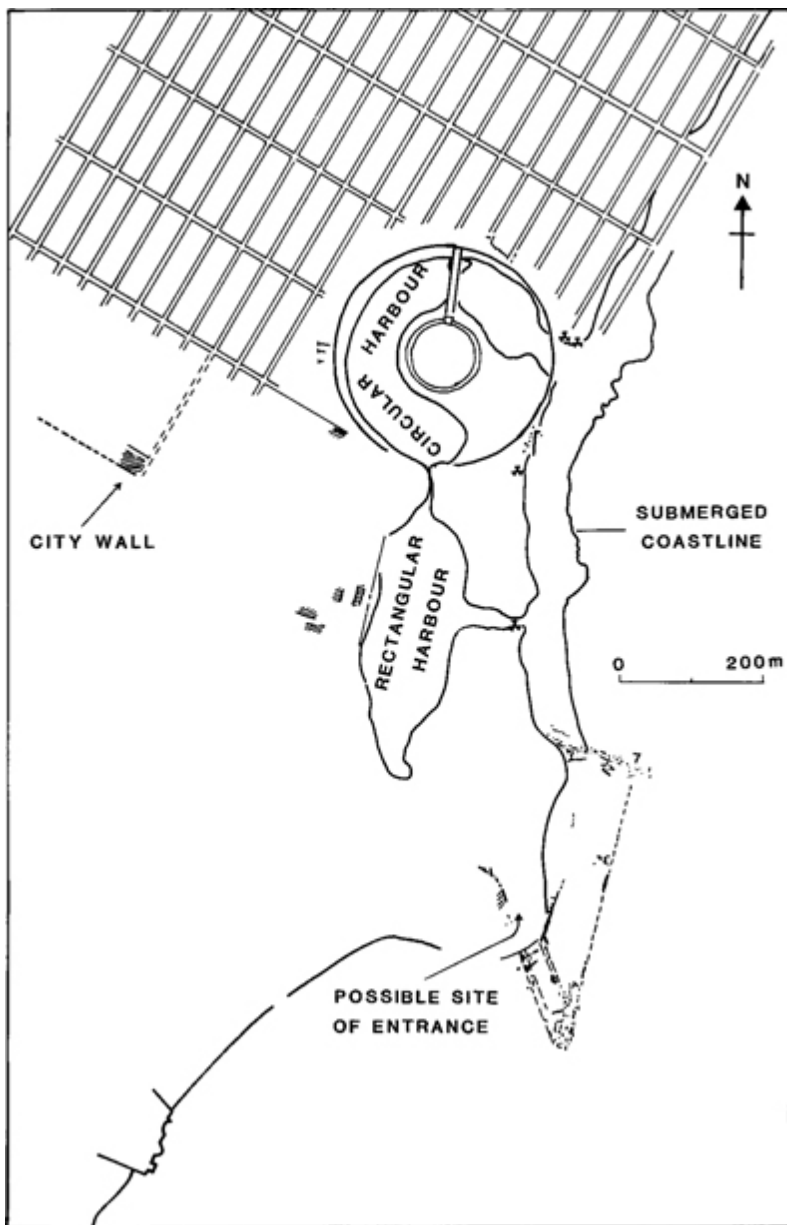


Figure 26.2 Plan of the harbour area at Carthage (*after Hurst*)

Appian described in *Libyca* (VIII, 96) and excavations on the island of the circular harbour have revealed a series of building phases dating from about 400 BC to the end of the seventh century AD. Stone-built Punic ship-sheds existed in the second century BC, but by the Augustan period they

had gone out of use. At some places it is still

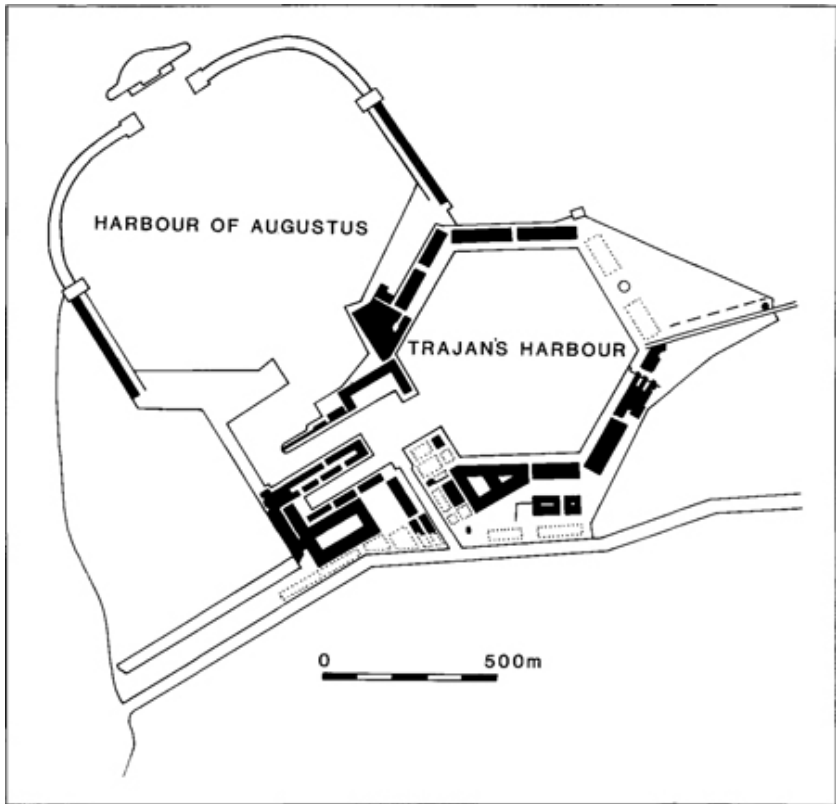


Figure 26.3 The harbour at Ostia (*after Meiggs and White*)

possible to see remains of harbour installations. The warehouses and porticos beside the quays at Lepcis Magna covered over 10 ha (25 acres) and parts of the 1200 m (1,350 yd) long quay still survive.

One of the best documented examples of the impact of trade in an area is at Ostia (fig. 26.3). Trade with Rome was extensive and as the city was situated 25 km (15 miles) inland the import of goods generated a thriving port and city on the sea coast at Ostia, the mouth of the Tiber, linked with Rome by roads and by the Tiber itself. The features that have been discovered on the coast may be exceptional, being the port of Rome, but they serve to illustrate a thriving community centred on a port. Initially a river harbour was sufficient to meet the needs of Rome, but by the beginning of the first century AD the size of merchant ships and the growing number began to accelerate overcrowding problems at the harbour, which had been developing for nearly a century. In addition, the silt

brought down by the Tiber was causing problems both in the harbour and further out to sea, thus preventing large boats with a deep draught from entering port. A contemporary account by Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives a clear impression of what Ostia was like in the first century BC:

The river widens considerably as it reaches the sea and forms large bays, like the best sea harbours. . . . Ships with oars, however large, and merchantmen with sails of up to 3,000 (*amphorae*) capacity enter the mouth itself and row or are towed up to Rome; but larger ships ride at anchor outside the mouth and unload and reload with the help of river vessels.

Other accounts, notably one by Strabo, refer to problems of silting and speak of Ostia being harbourless with boats having to anchor far out in the surge. Caesar planned to divert the Tiber and drain the salt marshes as well as build a harbour, but it was left to Claudius to take the initiative and begin this bold engineering venture. Suetonius tells us that:

at Ostia, Claudius threw out curved breakwaters on either side of the harbour and built a deep-water mole by its entrance. For the base of this mole he used the ship in which Caligula had transported a great obelisk from Heliopolis . . . and finally crowned with a very tall lighthouse that guided ships into the harbour at night by the beams of a lamp.

Work on this new harbour began in AD 42 some 3 km (2 miles) north of the Tiber and by AD 46 new canals were cut to connect it directly with the Tiber and Rome. The construction of buildings around the harbour continued for at least the first ten years of Nero's reign. The next major work was initiated by Trajan who built an hexagonal inner harbour with sides about 360 m (390 yd) long around which stood a whole range of buildings including baths, temples, a theatre and a palace. The need for this inner harbour was vividly demonstrated by a disastrous storm in AD 62 when 200 ships were wrecked within the Claudian harbour. Now the inner basin afforded shelter to large ocean-going ships which could unload their cargoes safely into the warehouses around the harbour or into river-going vessels for Rome.

Some goods were stored at Ostia until they could be moved upstream to Rome, or sent by road if this was more practicable. The buildings at Ostia, therefore, reflect this involvement with trade. There are a considerable number of *horrea*, many of which were used to store grain, but perhaps the building which best illustrates the city's close involvement with trade and

commerce, and particularly the use of boats for this purpose, is the Piazzale delle Corporazioni. Built at the time of Augustus this rectangular structure measured about 80 m by 110 m (87 yd by 120 yd) overall and consisted of a large open space around which was a double colonnade linking sixty-one small rooms, each of which was about 5 m by 4 m (16 ft by 13 ft). In the central open space was a temple possibly dedicated to the goddess Ceres. Of particular interest are the mosaics which were laid in front of each one of the small rooms depicting the occupation of the room's owner. The building is clearly a meeting place of traders where business was done, each room representing an office. A number were shippers as indicated by the mosaic inscriptions such as, *navi narbonenses* and the accompanying picture of a boat. On some of the mosaics depicting shippers a lighthouse is also seen, presumably the one which stood at the entrance to the harbour. Traders from Carthage, Alexandria, Nar-bonne, and Sardinia are recorded and represented are tanners, rope sellers, timber merchants, corn dealers and animal importers.

Ostia was not the only port to have been equipped with a lighthouse. They existed at Alexandria, Coruna (north-west Spain), Dover ([pl. 26.4](#)), Boulogne and Lepcis Magna and were designed not only to warn of dangers, but to guide ships safely to port.

The port of Ostia also provided another example of a type of engineering work which was to be found elsewhere in the Roman world, namely, the canal. Most canals were constructed to facilitate transport by boat, but some were cut to drain areas of land and to control rivers which might flood. The engineering problems in constructing such canals were considerable and great skill was required to maintain sufficient water to enable boats to move freely, involving the use of locks, barrages, sluice gates and weirs. Two literary references mention the movement of goods by canal. Tacitus speaks of a plan to connect the; Rhine and Saone so that merchandise could pass from the Mediterranean along them and into the seas beyond (*Annals* 13.53.3). The Younger Pliny wanted to connect a lake in the province of Bithynia with the sea (10.41).

The success of the communication system can be judged by the extent to which goods were traded within the Empire, something referred to elsewhere in this volume ([Chapter 25](#)). Although many roads and harbours were originally constructed to facilitate the movement of troops, they were later used for trading purposes and so were maintained. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Roman road network has left its mark on the modern landscape.



26.1 Roman bridge at Rimini



26.2 South-west corner of the late first-century timber quay and possible abutment (in the background) of the contemporary bridge over the Thames, at Pudding Lane, London



26.3 Late first-century timber quay backed by an open-fronted warehouse. The drain is second-century: Pudding Lane, London



26.4 The *pharos* at Dover



26.5 Mosaic from the Piazzale delle Corporazioni, Ostia, showing a grain ship from Sicily. The inscription refers to the *naviculare et negotiantes Karalitani*, shipowners and merchants from Cagliari

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PART 9

• SOCIETY •

• ROMANS • AND • • NON-ROMANS •

Mark Hassall

And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion that stood by, ‘Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman and uncondemned?’ (*Acts* 22, 25)

Paul’s status as a Roman citizen (*civis Romanus*) on this occasion won for him immunity from summary corporal punishment - immunity that he would not have enjoyed as a non-Roman, a mere provincial or *civis peregrinus*. Roman citizenship, like American or British citizenship today, carried with it certain privileges irrespective of the holder’s ethnic origin. As far as the centurion was concerned what mattered was that Paul had Roman citizenship. It was irrelevant that he was a Greek-speaking Jew from southern Asia Minor who had never set foot in Italy, let alone Rome, and whose knowledge of Latin was probably no better than the centurion’s.

The institution of Roman citizenship, something to which even the humblest provincial could aspire, was one of the great open secrets of the Roman Empire, and perhaps more than any other factor contributed to internal stability among the provincials. Through the award of citizenship (*civitas*) to the more intelligent and ambitious of the *peregrini*, the most influential sections of provincial society came to identify their own interests with those of the greater body of the Roman state. First generation provincials, particularly in the less civilized western provinces, might yearn for their independence, and indeed, on occasion, fight for it; but the wonder is not so much that the isolated revolt did in fact happen among Rome’s most recently acquired provinces, but that such revolts did not happen more

often and continue to happen. It was only when the security of the frontiers broke down in the course of the third century AD, coupled with the collapse of the economy, that in some areas sectional interests drove the provincials to revolt. And even when this did happen the rebellions were almost invariably attempts to gain a more favoured place in comparison with other regions, rather than to break away from the Empire. The Roman Empire, unlike the British Empire, did not collapse through the growth of nationalism within its borders, but through internal economic difficulties and external military pressures.

Before turning to examine more closely the whole question of Roman citizenship as opposed to provincial status, it is worth while drawing one other contrast, this time between the Roman Empire and the Greek World. If a Roman citizen could be ethnically a Greek, a Celt, Italian or Semite, whose first language was that appropriate to his origin, a Greek besides being ethnically a Hellene, also *spoke* Greek. In the very few cases where this was not so, for example at Side where the colonists, ethnically Greeks, adopted the local Anatolian language, it was a cause of acute embarrassment: as regards the Sidetans the claim was even made that, on their arrival, they suddenly started speaking an alien, and unique, language, rather than simply 'going native'. To be a Greek was furthermore to share in a common culture whose finest flowering is usually reckoned to have been at Athens in the fifth century BC, but which existed in all the cities of the Greek *diaspora*, from the colonies in the Black Sea to those in the western Mediterranean. From Panticapaeum in the Crimea to Massilia at the mouth of the Rhone, the colonists shared a common devotion to the epic poems of Homer and the cult of the Olympian gods. This cultural unity was in stark contrast to the lack of political harmony that existed in the Greek world; near neighbours among the city states of mainland Greece were more often than not deadly enemies, while rivalry might even spring up between mother cities and daughter colonies as happened in the case of Corinth and Coreyra (Corfu). In the Roman Empire on the other hand the imposition of the Roman peace created a world state in which internal warfare had no part, but one which embraced a large diversity of languages, religions and cultures.

There was however one concept that the Romans had, from the days of the Republic, shared with the Greeks: the notion that the natural way for a man to live was in a city-state, even if, in the case of Rome, this meant that any Italian south of the Po was counted as a citizen of Rome after the Social Wars of 90–88 BC, a privilege that was extended by Caesar to inhabitants of the whole peninsula in 49 BC. This was hardly surprising

since the normal polity for most of the more advanced Mediterranean races including Greeks, Romans, Etruscans and Phoenicians, was the city-state. The Latin word for the political entity that encompassed the totality of citizens (*cives*) of any one community was the same that was used for citizenship, *civitas*. In later Latin the word takes on a more concrete meaning, and from being an abstract term, comes to mean the physical reality behind it, hence the Spanish *civdad* and related words in other European languages, including our own 'city'. However, during the earlier Empire, *civitas* was not restricted to urban communities - city states - it could also apply to the non-urban tribal states of the north-west European provinces. As a corollary *civis* means not only a 'citizen', of Rome say, or Athens, but also, in the context of the tribal areas of the Empire, a tribesman, of the Breuci or the Remi for example.

Thus the provinces that comprised the Empire were composed of vast numbers of *civitates*, more precisely *civitates peregrinae*, provincial, or literally 'foreign' states. But whether the *civitates* were Greek city states or Celtic tribes, they had for the most part been free and independent of each other before incorporation into the Empire, and afterwards too, Rome allowed them to enjoy local autonomy. This was not just a case of altruism on the part of the ruler towards the ruled, but a natural consequence of the way Rome had acquired her Empire, the degree of local autonomy depending on a community's initial contact with Rome. Not all contacts had been warlike. During the last two centuries BC, as Rome expanded into the eastern Mediterranean, the Senate had concluded treaties (*foedera*) with numerous Greek city states. Texts of many of these survive in translations into Greek set up on inscriptions in the states concerned, and similar treaties will have existed with some of the tribal *civitates* of the west.

Sometimes the independence of these non-Roman communities within the imperial framework was recognized by Rome although no actual treaty existed between them. This meant in effect that, if Rome decided to violate a state's independence, at least she would not incur the religious sanctions involved in breaking the oaths that would accompany a formal treaty. From Asia Minor come two documents. The first, passed by the assembly of the people (*plebs*) at Rome, and so technically a *plebiscitum*, acknowledged the independent status of Termessus whose beautiful ruins lie high up in the Taurus mountains of southern Turkey. This spells out in detail the areas from which the townsfolk were to be immune from interference on the part of the Roman officials. The second a decree of the Senate (*Senatus Consultum*) dates to 39 BC, though the inscribed copy was actually cut two or three centuries later, and records similar immunity from interference for

the city of Aphrodisias, also in Asia Minor (Reynolds, 1982, Document 8). That the title of 'free and immune state' (*Civitas libera et immunis*) was no empty honour can be shown by the successful appeal by Aphrodisias against an attempt by Roman tax officials to levy a tax on nails on the city. As Hadrian concluded in his answer to the Aphrodisians (Reynolds, 1982, Document 15) the city was excluded from the provincial register (*formula provinciae*) and he had written to the procurator of Asia to instruct the contractor for the tax to keep away from their city.

The number of non-Roman provincial communities who enjoyed 'federate' status or 'immunity and freedom' must have been quite insignificant compared to those whose first contact with Rome had been a violent one. This will have been true especially of the western provinces where the tribal *civitates* had all too often been reduced by force of arms into the power of the Roman people, as the inscription recording the victory of Claudius in Britain inscribed on the triumphal arch set up in his honour phrases it. On such enemies who had had the temerity to offer resistance, Rome could impose such terms as she liked. Thus the tribe of the Salassi in the Val d'Aosta leading up to the Great and Little St Bernard passes, defeated by Terentius Varro in 25 BC, were sold into slavery, although a subsequent inscription shows that not all suffered this fate but that some came to live at the newly founded Roman colonial settlement of Aosta (Augusta Praetoria). Converting a defeated enemy into hard cash provided a quick financial return for the state, but in the longer term it was more profitable to turn him into a tax-payer and this is what normally happened. From the word for the payment of what was in effect the annual indemnity that Rome levied on a defeated enemy, *stipendium*, comes the term for the least favoured of all the provincial communities, the *civitates stipendiariae*. Even here however local affairs remained largely in the hands of the individual communities themselves. This is perhaps not surprising in the Greek east with its long tradition of urbanization, where the popular assemblies, councils and magistrates continued to fulfil their old functions, though Rome might curb the more democratic elements of city institutions through the relevant *hex Provinciae* (Part 6, Chapter 15).

Even in the north-west provinces, where there was virtually no tradition of municipal institutions among the tribal *civitates*, if it existed in embryonic form it was not simply swept away: Caesar (*Bellum Gallicum* I 16.5) mentions annual magistrates called vergobrets among the Aedui, while inscribed Celtic coins of the Lexovii, a tribal state whose territory extended southwards from the estuary of the Seine, show that the same office existed in northern France also. It is interesting therefore to find in

the imperial period, *vergobrets* continuing to function among the Santones, a coastal *civitas* of western Gaul. In fact there is little evidence to show precisely how the tribal *civitates* of north-west Europe came to adopt magistrates and councils on the Mediterranean model. Only in one case is there direct evidence. In AD 47 Corbulo 'imposed a senate, magistrate and laws' on the newly conquered Frisii, an experiment that did not last since the tribe soon rose in revolt.

The diversity that appears from a recent study of how the local administration operated among the Gallic *civitates* (Drinkwater, 1979), suggests that the tribal authorities were given something of a free hand when the time came to draw up their own constitutions, even if *leges provinciarum* provided some check. For such laws after the end of the Republic there is anyway virtually no evidence (Hassall, 1979, 250, note 2). A similar picture of local choice in such matters emerges from north Africa, where a Punic magistracy, the post of *suffes* survived. If the names for magistracies changed from *vergobret* to *suffes* depending on whether one was in the chief town of the Gallic Santones or north African Lepcis, or from *duovir* or *aedilis* in one of the more romanized western Mediterranean provinces, to *strategos* or *archon* in a Greek city-state, it was the male citizen body which elected the magistrates at annual voting assemblies. But the power in each community resided not with assembly or magistrates (the executive), but with the council (the legislative body known by a variety of names in the Latin west: senate, *curia* or *ordo decurionum*, and by the word *boule* in the Greek east).

Before the appearance of Rome, when the city states of the eastern Mediterranean had enjoyed true independence, the council had sometimes been a democratic body, annually elected like the magistrates and sometimes numbering several hundred, and so truly representative. Such a state of affairs was not acceptable to Rome with its tradition of senatorial oligarchical government: the letters written by the younger Pliny, the emperor's representative in the province of Bithynia in north-west Asia Minor, show how the Law of the Province (in this case the *Lex Pompeia*) limited the number of councillors and removed the elective element (Abbott and Johnson, 1926, 76). Councillors were appointed for life and were co-opted from the wealthier members of the community. It was this influential group within the Roman *civitates* which was cultivated by Rome. Its members, like St Paul from Tarsus in southern Asia Minor, were often not only citizens of their own town but also possessed Roman citizenship. Representatives of this class too played their part in the running of the Empire, as officers (*tribuni*) in the legions or commanders of

auxiliary regiments.

The Empire, then, of the first two centuries AD consisted of something over forty provinces. Within each province were members of non-Roman communities, *civitates peregrinae*, often city-states consisting of a city with its territory, but sometimes a tribal state whose magistrates met in one of the new urban centres which sprang up in the north-west and Danubian provinces of the Empire ([Part 5, Chapter 12](#)). Within each *civitas*, a relatively restricted group, the council, ran local affairs. It is usually assumed in the newly-organized *civitates* of north-western Europe that the council comprised one hundred members, like the ‘chartered’ towns discussed below, but direct evidence is lacking.

Alongside the *civitates peregrinae*, however, were other communities, where the mass of ordinary people either had ‘Latin rights’ or else possessed full Roman citizenship. They were the *municipia* and *coloniae*. Under the Republic *coloniae* in Italy could consist either of Roman citizens or citizens who had Latin rights only, but normally under the Empire and in the provinces a *colonia* was a settlement of Roman citizens, and the term will be so used here. To understand the distinction between full Roman citizenship and Latin rights, it is simplest to think of the earliest days of the Roman Republic when Rome herself was just one town in the plain of Latium and a partner with the others in the Latin League. Her citizens were registered in either one of four ‘urban’ tribes or thirty-one ‘rural’ tribes, and all Roman citizens continued to be so registered until the early third century AD, even if they had never set foot in Rome or the surrounding countryside. As citizens they had the right of electing magistrates and ‘passing’ legislation in popular assemblies; the former right was eventually transferred to the Senate under the emperor Tiberius, while the latter rapidly ceased to be of practical importance under the Empire. Those who possessed sufficient wealth and status could also hold office as magistrates and serve in the senate. The citizens of the towns of the Latin League and Rome herself enjoyed certain reciprocal rights in their dealings with each other, such as the right of trade (*ius commercii*) and the right of marriage (*ius conubii*), but they could only stand for election or vote in their own town. The reciprocal privileges were summed up in the terms *ius Latii*, right of Latium, (or *ius Latium*, Latian right or simply *latium*).

As Rome extended her power throughout Italy she came into contact with other towns to whom she allowed reciprocal rights similar to those enjoyed by the cities of the Latin League. And it was natural that as she gained her first overseas provinces, certain towns should be similarly treated, and awarded the *latium*. The process continued under the Empire

when there were important changes in both the scale of the grants and the privileges which they entailed, as will be seen below.

Besides binding pre-existing towns in the Italian peninsula to her by the award of Latin rights, Rome also established settlements or ‘colonies’ of her own citizens at places of strategic importance in a way similar to the fortified townships, *bastides*, later founded by Edward I in Gascony and Wales. One of the earliest of Rome’s overseas colonies was at Narbonne in southern France (118 BC). Narbo Martius or Colchester (AD 49) were founded very much as military strong points ([Part 5, Chapter 12](#)), but their inhabitants were not only veterans from the legions who might be expected to give a good account of themselves if a military emergency should arise, but they also formed a self-supporting agricultural community, like the settlers on an Israeli kibbutz. Indeed the word *colonia* simply means a body of *coloni* (farmers). The provision of agricultural land, at the expense of the former occupants of the site, was something which the state was expected to provide. There is much information about this aspect of the colonial settlement at Orange in southern Gaul, where the land allotted to the veterans was ‘centuriated’, rigidly divided up by a grid of access roadways and lanes covering many thousands of hectares, and where, uniquely, fragmentary copies of the *map (forma)*, inscribed on marble, have survived (Piganiol, 1962). The veterans of *Legio 71* who settled at Orange, not only dispossessed the local tribe, the Tricastini, of the best agricultural land, they also probably enjoyed another great economic advantage that will have been denied to their non-Roman neighbours. This was the right, originally granted by Rome to the towns and cities of Italy, and hence known as the *ius Italicum*, to enjoy freedom from the land tax, *tributum soli*. The occasion for the original grant had been the victory over Macedon at the battle of Pydna in 168 BC, when the wealth of this great hellenistic kingdom had accrued to Rome, but the expansion of the Empire during the later Republic had meant that it had been not only possible to maintain the immunity of Italy from taxation, but even extend the right to favoured cities in the provinces among whom, almost certainly, were the colonies of legionary veterans.

The colonies of Roman citizens resembled, therefore, detached parts of the Roman state: like the citizens of Rome itself their citizens were enrolled into the ancient voting tribes, while like the cities of the Italian peninsula as a whole most may have enjoyed immunity from direct taxation (*ius Italicum*). Similarly the *municipia*, though they had normally existed as non-Roman communities before the grant of the *ius Latii*, were by that grant brought into a similar relationship to Rome as the cities of the old

Latin League. In one technical respect too, both types of town shared something in common that the non-Roman *civitates peregrinae* lacked, which was the possession of a constitution inscribed on bronze tablets defining the way in which the settlement was to be governed. To establish a colony or grant municipal status it had, under the Republic, been first necessary for the popular assembly to pass enabling legislation. This law then empowered an official, which in the case of the colonies theoretically was the founder, the man who ‘led forth’ the colonists and was hence known as the *deductor*, to give or issue the detailed constitution to the new *municipium* or *colonia*. This document was therefore technically known as *lex data*, literally ‘given law’, and is conventionally often, if slightly misleadingly, translated as ‘charter’.

Substantial parts of four *leges datae* are known from southern Spain. The earliest in date is the charter of Urso, a colony of urban poor from the city of Rome, established on Caesar’s instigation shortly after his murder in 45 BC. The other three date to the later first century AD and relate to the creation of three *municipia*, Malaga, Salpensa and Irni. In none of these documents does a description of the actual constitution of the place concerned survive, although it is implied in the detailed series of regulations which are preserved. In all it will have been similar, consisting of the same three elements : popular assembly for the election of the magistrates (minute details for the elections are preserved in the Malaga charter, 51–60), the magistrates themselves and, finally, the all-powerful council which issued decrees and which was not unlike a self-perpetuating municipal mafia.

Section 103 of the Urso charter is of interest in that it refers to three classes of inhabitant of the colony (in the context of arming them in the case of a military emergency). There were, first, the citizens, of the colony itself (who will all have possessed Roman citizenship), second, *incolae*, literally ‘inhabitants’ but here a technical term meaning ‘resident aliens’, that is people whose legal abode was some other municipality, and finally the *contributi*. The last were, as with the Salassi at the north Italian colony of Aosta, non-Romans who were legally attached to the colony, just as the local British tribe, the Trinovantes, or at least some of them, may have been ‘attributed’ to the colony at Colchester. It is uncertain what rights, if any, such people normally had in a colony, but at Trieste the local tribes of the Carni and Catali, who were attributed, could stand for office, and if one was elected to the post of *aedilis*, he had the right of admission to the council, besides being awarded Roman citizenship. In this respect they were in a similar position to ex-magistrates in *municipia* like Salpensa

where it is known from its charter that such men, if they did not already possess Roman citizenship, were granted this honour, while if they were already citizens the grant could be made to another member of the family. One final point should be made about the 'chartered towns'. It is usually, and correctly, assumed that the position of a citizen of a colony was preferable to that of a man in a *municipium* who only possessed Latin rights, and that both were at an advantage when compared to the non-Roman member of a *civitas peregrina*. But paradoxically, the latter was at least subject to his own native laws, and even in a *municipium* like Salpensa, the straightforward process of manumission of slaves and the appointment of guardians to minors were the concern of the chief magistrates while the inhabitant of a colony, as a Roman citizen and subject to Roman law, would have to seek authorization from a Roman magistrate, the *praetor urbanus*, or a pro-magistrate like the governor. From the legal point of view, at a certain level, the non-Roman enjoyed greater autonomy than the normally more favoured Roman.

The numbers of non-Roman communities when related to the chartered towns, whose citizens had Latin rights and Roman citizenship, was not static, and the first two centuries of the Empire saw the steady and sometimes dramatic increase of the latter. Throughout this period large numbers of individual *peregrini* acquired Roman citizenship until finally at the beginning of the third century the distinction between non-Roman and Roman, full Roman citizenship and Latin rights became meaningless with the edict of Caracalla, by which all free born provincials were granted Roman citizenship.

The Social Wars of the early first century BC had resulted in the grant of Roman citizenship to the towns of Italy south of the Po, while Caesar had extended the area as far as Cisalpine Gaul, to include the land between the Po and the Alpine foothills (p. 687). Some of the tribes of the southern Alps whose status was not absolutely clear later had their rights confirmed by Claudius. He, incidentally, showed his liberal attitude by insisting that those Gauls who had Roman citizenship and could meet the necessary property qualifications were eligible for admission to the senatorial order and could hold magistracies at Rome. The controversy over this decision, in AD 48, is recorded by Tacitus with a summary of the emperor's speech to the Senate while the bronze tablet found at Lyon, the capital of the three Gauls, in 1528, gives part of Claudius' actual text. For him at least there were to be no second-class Roman citizens. But the possession of *civitas Romana* was no light honour and Suetonius records that Claudius deprived an important Greek of citizenship because he could not speak Latin, that he

actually executed men who had usurped the status, and attempted to prevent *peregrini* from using *gentilicia* (surnames) in the Roman fashion.

Under Nero the *civitates* of the small province of the Maritime Alps were given Latin rights and, perhaps under that emperor, the fifteen *civitates* of the neighbouring province of the Cottian Alps received the same honour. Such wholesale grants pale into insignificance compared to Vespasian's action in giving Latin rights to *all* peregrine communities in Spain. It has been calculated that Vespasian's grant benefited something of the order of 400 towns. The edict by which the grant was made will have been similar in function to the enabling legislation passed by the Roman people under the Republic before a colony was founded or municipal status awarded, and just as under the Republic, will have been followed by the issue of 'charters' (*leges datae*). The charters of Malaga, Salpensa and Irni are but three of the hundreds that had to be laboriously inscribed on bronze, itself no small labour, and sent to the new *municipia*.

Besides block grants to whole provinces, the emperors also created individual new chartered towns. Down to the early second century, colonies of Roman citizens continued to be established, the last two being foundations of Trajan, Sarmizegetusa, which owed its name to the old Dacian royal capital, though a considerable distance from it, and Timgad for veterans of *legio III Augusta* in Numidia. New *municipia* were also created, sometimes by giving Latin rights to pre-existing towns, and sometimes to whole tribal states as with the tribe of the Gallic Lingones near the headwaters of the Saone, who received *Latium* from Otho in AD 69. This was often done as the result of an initiative on the part of the community concerned. A particularly illuminating example relates to the small north African town of Gigthis on the coastal lagoon to the southeast of the Syrtis Minor (Gulf of Gabes). Here an honorary inscription has been found set up to a certain Marcus Servilius Draco Albucianus who had twice undertaken embassies to Rome at his own expense to secure the greater Latin rights and had finally met with success. The greater Latin rights (*Latium maius*) is explained by the second-century jurist Gaius, as the term used when all members of the municipal council gained Roman citizenship, and not only ex-magistrates, as was the case of the Spanish *municipia* like Salpensa. 'Greater Latin rights' were probably first awarded under Hadrian, or certainly existed by his time, as is known from another north African inscription, dated to that emperor's reign, from Thisiduo in the fertile Bagradas valley, on which the councillors (*decuriones*) are simply described as Roman citizens, *C(ives) R(omani)*.

Just as *civitates peregrinae* could become *municipia* with Latin rights

and, from the second century on, greater Latin rights, so *municipia* could obtain the title of colony. To cite one example, Nyon (Noviomagus) was originally a township (*vicus*) of the Gallic Tricastini, part of whose territory had been appropriated when land grants were made to the veterans of the *legio II* at Orange; the township was also the seat of the tribal administration (*caput civitatis*). It became a *municipium* under Augustus, from whom it took its new name of Augusta Tricastinorum, and by the end of the first century was accorded the title Colonia Flavia Tricastinorum. There is no particular reason to suppose that a draft of veterans from the legions was settled in the town at this time to account for the change in name. On the other hand we cannot be certain whether the title also carried with it a grant of Roman citizenship to the inhabitants. Such grants certainly could be made; Marcus Valerius Severus, the son of a man with the Punic-sounding name of Bostar, undertook an embassy to Claudius on behalf of the small Mauretanian town of Volubilis, and won a grant of Roman citizenship for his fellow townsfolk, besides various other privileges. In this case the official designation of the town became, and remained, *municipium*.

While whole communities, sometimes whole provinces, could be awarded Latin rights, and some favoured cities gained Roman citizenship, individuals were also able to achieve this desirable status. There were a number of avenues open to the aspiring citizen, and some have been mentioned already: in *municipia* with the lesser Latin right, candidates for office were awarded Roman citizenship if elected and similarly, at Trieste at any rate, non-citizen *peregrini* 'attributed' to a Roman colony won citizenship if elected to office. With the introduction of *Latium maius*, the whole council, probably normally a hundred men, was given Roman citizenship. Another way in which new citizens were created was by the manumission of slaves. Slaves who were given their freedom normally were accorded the same status as their master, whether he was peregrine, possessed of Latin rights, or full Roman citizen. The only exceptions were freedmen who had been irregularly or informally manumitted, or had been manumitted by a woman who had Roman citizenship; such men had the status of 'Junian Latins', so called from the *Lex Junta Norbana* AD 19 which defined their status. After his manumission a freedman normally took the family name (*nomen*) of his patron which he then in turn passed on to his descendants, and this explains why aristocratic *nomina* are sometimes borne by humble people. It only required the governor of a province to free numbers of his household on leaving office, for holders of his name to remain behind as living testimony of his spell of service.

There were cases where an emperor granted citizenship to the peregrine servants or friends of members of his own circle. Thus Pliny the younger wrote to Trajan on behalf of his Egyptian therapist asking for the emperor to bestow citizenship, adding at the same time a request for a similar grant for two freedwomen of a certain Antonia Maximilla, who, since their mistress was a woman, had only received the status of Junian Latins. The numbers of *peregrini* who acquired citizenship in this particular way will always have been small. Of much greater significance were the two categories of new citizen, both of which had served in the army ([Part 3, Chapter 6](#)).

The first were the sons of legionaries who, until a relaxation of the conditions by Severus in the early third century, had been forbidden to marry. Rules, however, and this perhaps more than many, are made to be broken, and it was inevitable that many men who served in the legions and who had to be Roman citizens to qualify for service, married and raised families. The sons of such unofficial marriages were, technically, illegitimate and therefore took the status of their peregrine mothers, but if they chose to follow in their father's footsteps and join the legions, they could expect to be given Roman citizenship on enlistment. Other suitably qualified recruits who were not Roman citizens were also sometimes given citizenship for the same reason.

The second category was that of the auxiliaries. They served in regiments of infantry (cohorts) or cavalry (*alae*) that were recruited from *peregrini* ([Part 3, Chapter 6](#)). Those who survived for twenty-five years earned discharge and with it a grant of the coveted Roman citizenship. The process by which the grant was made was as follows: the governors of the provinces in which auxiliary troops were stationed forwarded lists of eligible veterans to the emperor who then issued a decree granting them citizenship. The decrees followed a more or less stereotyped form giving the emperor's full titles and naming the province, governor and all the auxiliary units concerned in the grant, and finally all the recipients, unit by unit. With the exception of two small inscribed fragments, these decrees, which were inscribed on great tablets of bronze and attached to walls of various public buildings on the Capitol in Rome until AD 89, and thereafter on the wall behind the temple of Augustus on the Palatine, have long since disappeared, having been melted down for re-use. But copies in duplicate were made for the veterans themselves, and many of these have survived, some 322, in whole or in part, at the time of writing. The two small fragments of the original decrees in fact only survive because they were reused at a later date, in order to make these copies. The copies were

inscribed on two thin tablets of bronze, each about 15 by 13 cm (6 by 5 in.). These tablets were often, though not always, fastened together by two loops of wire which passed through two holes at the bottom corners of one of them and the top corners of the other, so that they could fold like the covers of a book. The word normally used today for the document, *diploma*, comes from a Greek root and means literally ‘a doubling’, and thus describes the document when the two leaves are folded together. On the inside faces of the leaves was a copy of the imperial decree, theoretically the only omission being the detailed listing unit by unit of all the recipients, instead of which only the name of the recipient concerned, his unit and commanding officer would be given. Once the inner faces of the tablets had been inscribed, the document was closed and a third wire was passed through two more holes which pierced the middle of both leaves, effectively clamping the two bronze tablets together face to face. The duplicate copy was then inscribed on one of the outer faces, and, to certify that both inner and outer texts were true copies of the original decree, the other outer face carried the names of seven witnesses (normal Roman procedure). In [Plate 27.1](#) (see also pl. 11.2 for Syria) it can be seen that, although each of the witnesses had the three names of a normal Roman citizen, the first name (*praenomen*) and family name (*nomen*) were separated from the third name (*cognomen*), because the binding wire passed across the space which, consequently, had been left blank and the seals of the witnesses were affixed at this point, enclosed in a small oblong bronze box.

Diplomas are in effect certificates of citizenship and it is misleading to call them ‘discharge certificates’ as is so often done, since although they were normally issued to veterans when they were discharged from the service, this was not always so. There is, for example, a diploma issued by Trajan to an auxiliary soldier recruited in Britain, who received Roman citizenship on the 11 August AD 106 along with his fellows in an auxiliary cohort *before* discharge because of courageous service in the emperor’s second Dacian war. This diploma is peculiar as, in the preamble, there is no mention of citizenship also being granted to the soldier’s children, present or future, together with the right of marriage (*conubium*) for any existing wife or to a future non-citizen wife, provided the soldier married only one woman. This provision is normally a regular feature of diplomas at this date, and the wives and children are also specifically mentioned.

It is clear from this and similar documents that even if the children are ignored, the granting of Roman citizenship to time-expired auxiliaries must over the years have added considerably to the number of new citizens,

particularly in a 'backward' province like Britain, where there will have been few Roman citizens, but at fifty the largest number of auxiliary units in any province and about a seventh of the total number in the Empire. It is perhaps worth trying to estimate just how many new citizens would be created annually in this way. To maintain itself, a long established auxiliary regiment of 500 men serving for twenty-five years would have to accept on average twenty new recruits a year to replace the twenty veterans who retired. If we take Britain as an example, there were the equivalent of fifty-seven such regiments (seven of the fifty numbered 1,000 instead of 500) so that theoretically there could have been as many as 1,140 new citizens a year. Even if one assumes that only half survived to discharge, the figure could have been largely made good by children of veterans who benefited at the same time (cf. Roxan, 1981, 276–7 for figures on the proportion of veterans who had wives and for the size of families).

The formulae on the diplomas changed precisely in AD 140. Henceforth children born to a veteran before the grant of citizenship were not included. This change, which on the face of it appears somewhat retrogressive, is usually explained by the theory that, if the sons of veterans already had Roman citizenship, then there would be no inducement for them to join. Margaret Roxan, however, has recently shown (Roxan, forthcoming) that there is more to the change than simply a desire to get more recruits. Indeed there is no independent evidence to suggest that recruits for the auxiliaries were at all in short supply. She suggests that in AD 140 an anomaly was being corrected because the auxiliaries had reached a more advantageous position than legionaries. Both groups of men were, by Roman military law, forbidden to marry, yet the children of the former born before discharge were awarded citizenship while those of the latter were not. She further connects the change in AD 140 with a phenomenon which occurred in the late 160s. A dramatic drop in the number of surviving diplomas suggests that from 140 auxiliary soldiers were brought into line with legionaries in another way. By 140 many recruits to the auxiliary regiments will have been Roman citizens, while those who were not, possibly just the sons of serving soldiers, now received citizenship on enlistment. Thus in 140 Antoninus Pius may have been taking away from the auxiliaries a privilege with one hand, but giving back something with the other. This is precisely what Caracalla did three-quarters of a century later, on an even greater scale.

These then were the roads to Roman citizenship: through the office of magistrate or councillor in a town with the lesser or the greater Latin rights, through manumission by a master who was himself a citizen, or through

service in an auxiliary regiment. By the early third century AD there must have been many who had followed them and won the coveted status. The climax came in AD 212 when Caracalla granted Roman citizenship, with minor exceptions, to all free-born provincials. The edict (*constitutio*) by which Caracalla made this grant is generally known today as the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. His motives in making the grant may not have been entirely lacking in self-interest, but one thing is clear; the distinction between Roman and non-Roman, as far as those living within the borders of the Empire were concerned, virtually ceased to exist.

As a mark of this new status, the new citizen formally took a family name (*nomen*) on the Roman model. Sometimes this was based on his own single peregrine name or that of his father. Thus a man called Placidus, the son of Viducus, a tribesman of the Velioasses north-west of Paris, whose name appears on an inscription from Holland dating to before Caracalla's edict, is attested on an inscription from York dated to AD 221 with the name Viducius Placidus (cf. Bogaers, 1983, 21–4). Others took the *nomen* of their patron Caracalla, Aurelius. The habit even temporarily spread to those who were citizens already and had a perfectly respectable *nomen* of their own (Gilliam, 1965, 86–90), so that, for example, a man known from a series of inscriptions in Rome as Tiberius Julius Balbillus before the edict, occurs after it in AD 215 as Aurelius Julius Balbillus (Sherwin-White, 1973, 387, note 2).

What induced Caracalla to issue his grant, and what practical difference did the grant make to its recipients? A contemporary, the historian Dio, whose work is hostile to Caracalla, while discussing his financial exactions and explaining that these went in increased pay for the army, gives him a financial motive. Roman citizens living in Italy and in many, if not all, of the colonies originally established for legionary veterans were immune from land tax, but there were two minor indirect taxes to which they, unlike non-Romans, were liable. These were the 5 per cent tax on manumissions of slaves and the 5 per cent death duty. The revenues from these two taxes went to the *aerarium militare*, the military treasury established by Augustus as a pension fund for legionaries. Before making all non-Romans liable to these taxes by converting them into citizens, Caracalla doubled the rate of both to 10 per cent! Whatever motives he may have had, there must certainly have been a financial aspect to the *Constitutio* and the one practical difference that it made to the new citizens was that they paid more taxes.

Caracalla's motives are not the only controversial aspect of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. Much argument surrounds a fragmentary papyrus

which either gives the actual text of the edict, or was a measure issued supplementary to it (Lewis and Reinhold, 1955, 427–8 for the text; Sherwin-White, 1973, 380–94). Among other matters, this debate is concerned with the exact meaning of a group called the ‘*dediticii*’, who do not appear to have benefited from the grant. The Latin word normally refers to those who had surrendered unconditionally, as had all those non-Roman communities originally defeated in battle, but the term can hardly refer to the *civitates stipendiariae* who were the chief beneficiaries from the grant. Presumably it meant very recently conquered peoples, who had not yet been granted the right of self-government and whom, for various reasons, it might have been desirable to keep apart from the mass of ordinary provincials. Such a group were the tribal warriors defeated by Severus Alexander in some unrecorded campaign in north Britain, whose presence on the Roman frontier in southern Germany, twenty years after Caracalla’s edict, is attested by an inscription (pl. 27.2). They remained there as non-Romans helping to defend the Empire whose peace they had disturbed, with perhaps only the remote possibility of eventually becoming full citizens.

When Paul was about to be flogged, he told his captors that he was a Roman citizen and was immediately released. A hundred years later, in AD 153, a veteran of an auxiliary cavalry regiment, Gaius Maevius Apellas, was not so fortunate and was summarily beaten by local officials. It must have been small comfort to him that the beating was illegal, although it was still thought worth lodging an official complaint (*Select Papyri* II 254). After another century, a generation or so after all free men in the Empire had become ‘Romans’, even the complaint would not have been worth making. In the first two centuries of the Empire a distinction existed between upper-class provincials who were Roman and lower-class provincials who were not. Now all were technically Roman, but the gulf still existed, and by the fourth century was legally recognized. Those whom the second-century orator, Aelius Aristides, in his panegyric to Rome had once defined as Roman ‘the more cultured, better born, and more influential’ were now known by the simple word *honestiores* (‘more honourable’), while the non-Roman rest whom he had categorized as ‘vassals and subjects’, though now technically Romans, were called *humiliores* (literally the lower classes). And the lot of the *hum Mores* compared to their counterparts in the early Empire was bleak, in an age when injustice was rife and corruption endemic.

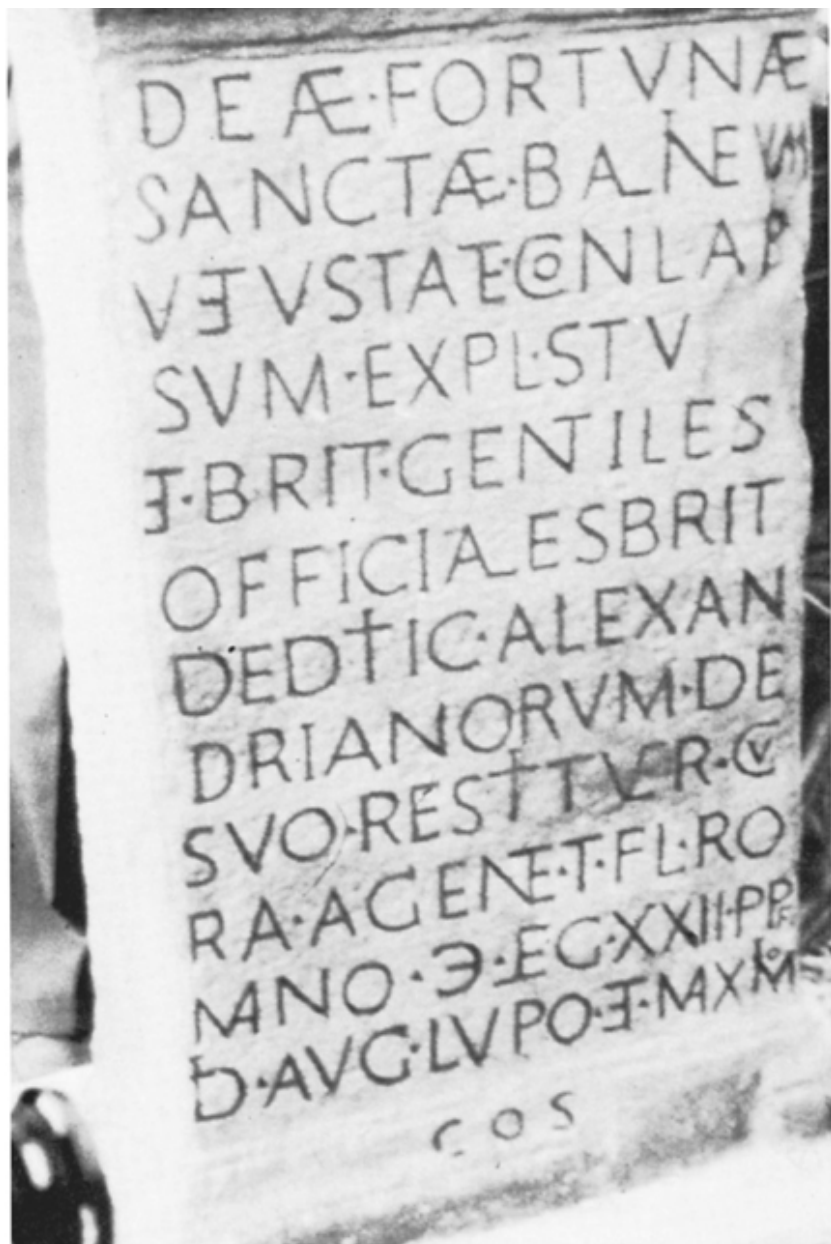


(a)



(b)

27.1 (a) Inner faces of the *diploma* of AD 122 (*CIL* XVI 69) granting Roman citizenship to a Pannonian, Gemellus, the son of Breucus (mentioned in the last line). The preamble lists fifty auxiliary regiments in the army in Britain in which there were veterans who were receiving citizenship at the same time (b) Outer faces of the same *diploma*, with a second copy of the grant of citizenship inscribed on one leaf and the names of seven witnesses on the other



27.2 Dedicatory inscription from Walldürn on the *limes* in southern Germany (ILS 9184), mentioning (lines 6–8), the *Britones dediticii*, *Alexandriani*, a group of irregular soldiers who will not have benefited from Caracalla's grant of citizenship.

• LABOUR •

P. A. Brunt

The economy of the Roman Empire was predominantly agricultural; for the rich land was the safest, and therefore the most honourable investment and most men worked on the fields. The development of trade and industry was hampered by the high cost of transport, especially by land (Part 8, Chapter 23; Brunt, 1971, 179–81, 135, 703–6; Duncan-Jones, 1982, App. XVII but note K. Hopkins, 1983), and by technological backwardness; inventiveness, not marked in the Greek world, diminished under Roman rule. No doubt knowledge which already existed in the more advanced areas was more widely diffused, yet the water-mill, devised in Asia in the first century BC, was not generally used for four centuries, and then only for the grinding of grain (Finley, 1981, Chapter 11). In the absence of large machines there was no advantage in concentrating labour in big factories; industrial establishments will hardly ever have employed more than a score or two of hands (Kiechle, 1969), and in some workshops the master craftsman would work side-by-side with a few slaves. Wool was often spun and woven in the great households under the eye of the mistress, or by artisans in their own homes.

Transport costs must also have limited the movement of foodstuffs. Even large estates sometimes aimed at self-sufficiency. The cities could only afford imports from beyond their own territories in so far as they could sell their own manufactures or services in return. Except in some favoured regions like the Nile valley the level of agricultural production was probably low. In the first century Columella had the impression that the average return of grain in Italy was fourfold or less (*On Agriculture* III 3,4). He held that most land needed to be fallowed every alternate year.

Though the value of manure as a fertilizer was well understood, this practice made it hard to raise enough beasts for the purpose as well as to grow food for the human population. One consequence was that the poor can seldom have eaten meat. Famines or scarcities must have been frequent, not to speak of persistent undernourishment and increased susceptibility

to disease. Naturally, when prices soared, the poor suffered most. A fourth-century famine at Antioch, one of the largest cities, was alleviated by the extraordinary organization of supplies from districts not more than 50 to 100 km (30 to 60 miles) away (Julian, *Misopogonos* 369); this illustrates how dependent people normally were on the resources of their own neighbourhood. It is no objection that large quantities of food were shipped long distances to Rome, Constantinople and the armies, for in these cases the state paid out of imperial revenues.

Hence the high civilization that the few attained inevitably rested on an unequal distribution of resources; it was secured, and aggravated, by the concentration of political power both centrally and locally in the hands of a small class, who exercised it in their own interests. The general standard of life cannot be gauged from magnificent public buildings or the opulent villas of the rich. Carcopino has given a graphic and documented account of the squalor of the majority in Rome itself (1941, Chapters I–II); here and perhaps in the few other big cities that existed, overcrowding was perhaps an exceptional cause of misery, though it is also revealed in Egyptian towns and villages, (Lewis, 198 3, 53 and 158) and probably conditions were no worse than in London or many western cities until fairly recent times, or in some urban agglomerations of other lands in our own day. Most men of course lived in the country, or in small towns, many of whose inhabitants went out daily to till the adjoining fields. At least in Mediterranean lands, land-owners too preferred to live in towns, and they often contributed handsomely to the construction of temples, colonnades, gymnasia, public baths and fountains, theatres, amphitheatres and so forth; these amenities not only ministered to their own pride and pleasure but also benefited the poor who lived in or near the towns, but they were seldom found in villages. The funds needed for these buildings, if not supplied by the magnates, must have come chiefly from the rents of lands owned by the cities themselves, or occasionally from imperial benefactions, that is to say from general taxation or from the rents of imperial domains. In any event, the revenues of most cities were ultimately extracted from the surplus production of rural workers, who must have constituted about 90 per cent of the total population; yet they derived the least advantage from the

expenditure. The peasants sometimes lacked local civic rights, and were thus excluded from many benefactions, which provided for distributions of food, wine or cash only to citizens; some charitable foundations also restricted the recipients to those living inside the walls. Galen (VI K 749ff.) tells that in time of dearth city dwellers in Asia would seize all the cereals after the harvest, leaving the rustics to subsist on pulses, tree-shoots, wild roots and grasses (from which they contracted diseases that fascinated him as a doctor). Idylls of country scenes and laudations of the dignity of labour on the land, like Virgil's, were composed by those who never turned a sod.

Some of these and later generalizations cannot be proved, though they may be illustrated, by specific evidence, which is always meagre, but derive from consideration of the basic social and economic structure of the Empire. Numerical data are in particular lacking. Censuses were taken of Roman citizens, and of the inhabitants of provinces, with their property, but figures survive only for the totals of citizens registered under Augustus and Claudius. From the former we can infer that c. AD 14 the free inhabitants of Italy numbered about 5 millions; conjecturally 2 or 3 millions of slaves may be added. Under Augustus and Nero the population of Egypt is also said to have stood at about seven millions (Diodorus I, 31; Josephus, *Jewish War* II, 385). If these figures are accepted, the estimate made by Beloch, a master of demography, of 50 to 60 millions for all the inhabitants of the Empire in about AD 1 seems somewhat too low. We have no figures at all to show whether thereafter the population was static, declining or growing, but a decline might explain the apparent shortage of manpower in the fourth century (p. 705); it could be ascribed to the pandemic diseases of the second and third centuries, and to the disruption caused by barbarian inroads after c. 250. It is also commonly believed that the importation of slaves diminished (p. 715). Infant mortality must of course have been very high, and it was aggravated by the practice, which the law sanctioned until Christian times, of exposing unwanted children, especially girls. Attempts have been made to calculate the average expectation of life from the numerous tombstones which purport to record the ages of the deceased, but K. Hopkins proved that the data must be unrepresentative and sometimes false: they produce results which are incoherent and impossible in the light of modern statistical evidence; but it may be assumed, on the basis of well-documented material from modern pre-industrial societies, unaffected by advances in hygiene and medicine unknown in antiquity, that with infant mortality about 200 per 1,000 births the expectation of life was below 30; some confirmation comes from the papyrological records of Egypt (Brunt, 1971, Chapters IX-XI; Hopkins, 1966). Naturally the labouring poor had

the shortest life span, and they must have composed the immense majority. In Italy substantial citizens with their families will have numbered 350,000 to 700,000 (Brunt, 1962, 71); the remaining 90 per cent or more of the population had to work for their livelihood. It is unlikely that the well-to-do formed a higher proportion of inhabitants of the provinces than in Italy, where riches had been accumulated from the profits of Empire.

These profits had been used in part for the massive importation of slaves. Domestic slavery was ubiquitous in the ancient world, and in the more advanced Greek states slaves had also been extensively employed in the fields, mines and shops, and in the crafts and professions; this continued in Roman times. Galen supposed that in his native Pergamum they constituted a third of the population, but in Italy the proportion may have been higher. The extent to which they were used in most of the provinces is unknown. The elder Pliny ranked Spain next to Italy in many blessings, including the proficiency of slaves (*Natural History* XXXVII, 203). But in Egypt and Palestine most rural and industrial workers were nominally free. For many areas there is no evidence. However, slavery was not the only possible form of legal servitude (cf. Ste Croix, 1981, 147ff. and Jones, 1974, Chapter XIV).

Debt bondage, which still exists today in some parts of the world, and which requires the debtor to render services to a creditor in return for loans he is not able or perhaps intended to repay, was known to Varro (*On Agriculture* I, 17) from Asia, Egypt and Illyricum. He treats it as a thing of the past in Italy, and it is never mentioned by the jurists. However, in Roman law the creditor could take his debtor into custody by order of the court; as he had to provide him with maintenance, this looks like a sanction against the debtor who was able but refused to make payment. Still, some texts suggest that in Italy it might be the means of pressure on an insolvent debtor to work off his debt by an informal agreement of which the law knew nothing. Landowners could also distrain the personal goods of tenants who failed to pay rent; the threat to do so may have been the means of forcing them to remain in their holdings at times of labour shortage, when it would have been hard to find replacements. Debt was indeed probably a large factor in the growth of large estates: small owners, unable to store much surplus produce in good seasons and hold out for higher prices, could amass no reserves and had to borrow in bad years in order to obtain subsistence and seed, very probably on terms that gave them little chance of ever clearing their indebtedness. A revolt in Gaul in AD 21 was supported by a multitude of *obaerati* who were probably debt bondsmen (Tacitus, *Annals* III, 42): it was directed as much against the Gallic

magnates as against Roman rule. And even when peasants were not reduced to debt bondage, they may often have been milked by urban money-lenders. The Jewish rebels in 66 burned the record offices in which the bonds for debt were filed, and in 70 peasants did the same at Antioch (Josephus, *Jewish War*, II, 427; VII, 61).

Serfs, persons nominally free but bound by hereditary obligations of law or custom to work on the lands of others, had been found before the time of Roman rule in for example Etruria, Sparta, Gaul and some eastern regions, certainly not in all; thus serfdom did not exist in Palestine nor in Egypt. It does not seem to have survived under Rome, till recreated in the late Empire. Until that time Roman jurists know nothing of it. They envisage contracts of tenancy, under which the owner may evict the tenant, but the tenant is free to leave. That was clearly the practice in Italy itself. Petitions from tenants (*coloni*) on imperial domains in Asia and Africa reveal that they had been on the same land for generations but that they were not legally restrained from moving. In Egypt too both public and private land was leased; admittedly the government sometimes forced men to take up leases of *public* land and debarred them from leaving during the tenancy. Here too the *fellahin* were liable to innumerable taxes and compulsory labour services for the state; the burden was so great that 'flight up-country' resulted in the almost complete desertion of some villages, and the orders given that men should return to their homes for the periodic censuses were probably ineffectual. But wretched as the condition of the *fellahin* was, they were not serfs bound to private proprietors.

It was perhaps Diocletian who introduced a system, progressively developed throughout the Empire, under which *coloni* at least on large estates were bound to the soil, they and their descendants, and to some extent placed under the jurisdiction of the owners. At the same time the owners were forbidden to alienate any slaves they employed on their estates. Thus *coloni* and rural slaves were assimilated to each other. In the same period persons in various other categories who furnished the state with essential supplies, services or revenues, were similarly bound along with their descendants to their respective callings; they included city councillors, soldiers, and those engaged in provisioning the City of Rome (Jones, 1974, Chapter XXI). It seems plausible to suppose that these regulations, which could not in fact be thoroughly enforced, were the consequence of a shortage of manpower. Of course this system prevented tenants from taking advantage of a dearth of labour to better their condition by offering themselves to the highest bidder; that was a gain to the landlords, but the restriction on the movement of rural slaves, which

limited their profitable use or sale, shows that the primary motive of the government was not that of favouring their interests.

Debt bondsmen and serfs retained their free status in the eyes of the law. They could acquire and transmit property; in principle the debt bondsman could pay off what he owed. They could contract valid marriages and enjoy a stable family life, though poverty might compel men to expose newborn infants, and even to sell children, when they had no means of maintaining them. If the serf could not legally leave his land, he was at least secured in his tenure; most peasants doubtless desired nothing more. They were not subject to the life-and-death power of a master, and they had access to the courts, though the later *coloni* were barred from impleading their lords, and were liable to be flogged at their order. Not indeed that access to the courts was worth much to any of the poor, who might not know their legal rights, would lack time and money to sue, often in assizes distant from their homes, and could not match the money and influence by which the great could pervert the course of justice; moreover, the successful litigant was usually left to execute for himself the civil judgments of the courts, and the poor man could seldom have had the requisite power (Kelly, 1966; Burton, 1975).

By contrast the slave was in many respects a mere chattel, to be bought and sold like any other animal. Protected against damage by third parties in the interest of his owner, he was in the absolute power of the master, who could put him to death. Some imperial enactments were designed to shield him from excesses of the master's cruelty or lust, but he could not plead his own case in court, and these laws were probably in themselves generally as ineffective as comparable legislation in later slave societies is known to have been; however, they reflect a prevalent opinion in the master class that slaves should be treated with some measure of humanity; Seneca says that savage owners were pointed at in the streets (*de dementia* I, 18). The Emperor Pius justified one such measure by the general interest of owners; the cruelty of an individual, by stirring up general unrest among the slaves, might be injurious to all owners (*Digest* I, 6, 2; cf. Diodorus XXXIV-V, 2ff.). The slave's best protection always lay in the fact that he was a piece of property whose value no sensible owner would wish to impair. And he was particularly valuable because after all he was a man, a 'living tool' (as Aristotle had said), but a tool of special versatility on account of his human intelligence. The law itself recognized his humanity in admitting his capacity to commit crimes and give evidence, and his potentiality for freedom. Rewards as well as punishments were needed to get the best from him. Thus he might be paid wages or set up in business, rendering only part

of his receipts to his owner. What he earned and saved, or obtained as gifts, could form his *peculium*, property which strictly belonged to his owner, but which custom allowed him to treat as his own; it could be substantial. He could not contract a valid legal marriage, and the child of the slave woman was always the property of her owner; but in practice the stable cohabitation of slaves was often treated as if it were a marriage. None the less slaves remained utterly dependent on the master, who could always seize their *peculium*, and break up families by sale, gift or bequest. Manumission too was a reward given at the master's discretion.

No generalizing about the lot of slaves in the Roman Empire is possible. As with all slave societies, there are stories of mutual affection between masters and slaves, or of lust and savagery, reciprocated by hatred and murder; they cannot be made the basis for any general conclusions, if only because it was the minority of slaves in close contact with their owners who were most likely to experience special benevolence or cruelty, not the masses employed in fields, workshops and mines, whose welfare would depend chiefly on the behaviour of overseers. Diodorus (V, 36–8) tells how in the Spanish mines of the late Republic slaves were worked to death in appalling conditions. From the economic standpoint this was rational only because they were exceptionally cheap and because huge profits could be made quickly. Brutality also precipitated the outbreak of the first of three great slave revolts in the Republic, but there were other factors, which cannot be discussed here; no comparable risings are attested in the imperial period, partly no doubt because the government had the means to repress disturbances more promptly; slave revolts have been rare in all times, no doubt chiefly because of the difficulty of organizing them when the power of the state is exerted efficiently. The rebels seem to have sought only to secure freedom for themselves, not to remould the social structure; the same desire for personal freedom explains the flight of slaves, which was probably always frequent, and need not betoken that the fugitives had been ill-treated. Slaves could normally expect food, clothes and shelter, of which the free poor had no guarantee, especially in times of scarcity; the harsh Cato even prescribed grain rations for heavy farm labourers larger than those of the Roman legionary; owners needed to conserve their property and ensure good work.

Slaves were employed not merely in the mines and fields, but in more skilled occupations in trade and industry; they could be teachers, doctors and architects; they performed all sorts of clerical tasks, notably as secretaries and accountants in government departments. In such cases the prospect of freedom was an essential incentive to efficiency. They might

‘buy’ it by surrendering *peculium* in whole or part, or might receive it as a gift; it is not known which was most common. The freedman might be required to render services without payment in return for maintenance to his old master, now his patron. Some freedmen lived in his household, and the patron might provide in his will that after his death they should be fed and clothed by his heirs as in his own lifetime. But others amassed fortunes, the basis of which was often the *peculium* acquired in slavery; patrons had important but limited rights to inherit from them, but they would often not be his dependants in economic terms. Petronius’ novel gives us a picture of vulgar freedmen millionaires in which realism and fantasy are inextricably mingled. Thus economically some freedmen, and even slaves, did not belong to the lowest stratum. It is, however, a ludicrous error to suppose that most slaves could count on manumission. The elder Pliny calls the slave field-workers in Italy ‘men without hope’ (*Natural History* XVIII, 36). The Roman agronomists assume that even farm managers will be slaves, and such was the condition of most of those commemorated in (the rather few) gravestones. But most slaves must have been engaged in agriculture (and the miners will not have been more fortunate).

It may incidentally be observed that manumission could in some degree promote social mobility in a world that was for the most part structured hierarchically. Tacitus alleges that many senators in the first century were of servile descent (*Annals* XIII, 27). Pertinax, the son of a freedman, became emperor in 193. For the freeborn poor the army, recruited chiefly from the peasantry, presented almost the only means of advancement. A small minority of soldiers could rise from the ranks to the dignity and wealth of a centurion, and a few of these could go still further. In the third century particularly peasant soldiers reached the highest positions and even (it was alleged) the imperial purple.

Even in Italy and still more in the provinces, slaves can only have constituted a minority of the working population. Everywhere the majority must have consisted of peasants who cultivated small holdings, which they either owned or leased by contract or on terms fixed by custom, and who relied chiefly on their own labour and that of their families; of shopkeepers and craftsmen, and of hired labourers, not subject to any form of legal servitude. These people were limited in their freedom by lack of both economic power and political rights, and their standard of living was often no better, and might be worse, than that of chattel slaves. No doubt they included some who worked themselves but were possessed of means sufficient to employ slaves too. Shopkeepers and artisans might have slaves

as assistants; army veterans often owned slaves, whom they might have acquired in service, to help in the cultivation of small farms on which they were settled after discharge, and tenant farmers sometimes employed slaves, perhaps hired out to them by the proprietor. It is reasonable to describe the Roman economy, at least in Italy and in some provincial regions, as slave economy, because total production depended largely and essentially on slave labour, and especially that production from which members of the ruling class derived their income. Their slave holdings could be very large. Augustus thought it expedient to forbid men to manumit over a hundred slaves by will. A prefect of the city of Rome murdered by his slaves in AD 61 owned 400 in his town house, and must have had many more on his estates to support this establishment. The saintly Christian lady Melania in the fourth century is credited with possessing among other estates one of sixty-two hamlets near Rome with 400 slave labourers (cf. Jones, 1964, 778–93). By contrast in 1850, when slaves in the Southern States of the USA numbered a third of the population only eleven owners had over 500 slaves apiece. Very probably slave competition held down the remuneration that the free poor could expect for their labour, especially in agriculture and mining; it must, however, be recalled that slaves employed in skilled occupations themselves often received more than the equivalent of a mere subsistence wage, and even rural slaves might be allowed *peculium* in the form of garden plots and farmyard hens.

Extremely little is known of the working population in general, but more of the slaves than of any other section of it. Since slaves were property, they were of constant concern to the jurists, who provide our most valuable information. Domestic and secretarial staff were also in closest contact with their employers, and therefore figure in frequent incidental allusions in the surviving literature. But this literature was almost in its entirety written for, and often by, the elite, who clearly had no interest in the lot of their inferiors for its own sake. Historians and orators had indeed described the discontents of the poor, in times when they had votes by which they could try to enforce their demands or when the soldiery was a civic militia that might reflect their grievances. The Principate extinguished political rights, and organized a professional army in which the soldiers, though recruited from the lower classes, were divorced from the civil population by long service often far from their homes (Baynes, 1955, 307–8). Troops were now available to suppress *émeutes* at an early stage. Detailed historical narratives, moreover, which might reveal the continuance of social discontent, are extant only for short periods of the Principate. Where they

exist, they sometimes indicate that it had its part in such risings as did occur. Reference has already been made to those in Gaul in 21, and in Judaea where bandits (*sicarii*) had long infested the countryside before they joined the rebels in 66; Josephus, who often refers to them, treats them as mere criminals, but his evidence shows that in reality most of them combined religious fanaticism with hatred of exploitation by upper-class Jews as well as of Roman rule. Banditry is a well-known symptom of social unrest, and there are scattered allusions to it in various times and places in the Empire. Urban food riots are also known to have occurred. In the late Empire peasants at times combined with barbarian invaders in the delusion that the disruption of Roman power would alleviate their lot (Ste Croix, 1981, 317–21, 474–88 ; cf. Hobsbawm, 1969).

For Italy of the late Republic and first century AD the agronomists and Pliny's *Natural History* furnish exceptional information on agricultural labour, especially slave labour, but we cannot generalize to the provinces; what is known of one region cannot be assumed to be true of any other in the absence of specific corroborating evidence or arguments. Normally literary works hardly notice the labouring population except when they caused disturbances. This is not indeed true of Christian writers, nor it seems, of Rabbinic texts. In the apostolic age the Christians were 'the weak things of the world' (I *Corinthians* 1,27); and there is more than a tinge of social protest in the New Testament, for instance in the Beatitudes, which promise blessings to the poor and hungry and retribution to the rich. Later too the Church made its converts, as Celsus complained (Origen, *against Celsus* III, 55) among weavers, cobblers, yokels and other uneducated folk. But Christian writers are naturally concerned chiefly with spiritual themes and allude only incidentally to material conditions.

Where else is there evidence? Thousands of inscriptions survive, although in some regions these too are rare. Moreover, it is certain that the masses especially in the countryside were mostly illiterate and that for centuries few even spoke Latin or Greek, the languages in which most inscriptions were written (Brunt, 1976, 190–2; Balsdon, 1979; Harris, 1983, especially 59ff. and 87ff.). These people had no motive to leave any epigraphic memorial to their existence, even an epitaph, which in itself usually tells little, and especially one affixed, as they often are, to a sculptured gravestone, the cost of which would have been beyond their means (Duncan-Jones, 1982, 80 and 131). It is therefore not surprising that inscriptions of rural workers, whether of small owners, tenants, farm-managers, agricultural labourers, slave or free, are most uncommon, as are those of unskilled labourers like dockers in the towns, as distinct from

shopkeepers and craftsmen, who were often perhaps employers of labour. Thus the population known to the epigraphist is no true counterpart of the actual population of the Empire, most of whose inhabitants lived and died without a trace.

In Egypt alone abundant papyrological material illustrates life at every level, though it has not yet been fully and systematically analysed for the specific purpose of determining the condition of the labouring poor. Moreover this uniquely fertile land, 'the gift of the Nile', in which the necessity for centralized control of irrigation had led to the evolution of a system in which the economy was minutely regulated and in which the government itself therefore to a large extent directed labour resources, was so different from every other province that evidence cannot be safely extrapolated for Egypt to other parts of the Empire.

The material remains discovered by the archaeologist may also illustrate the life of the poor, though they were naturally endowed with fewer of the worldly goods which the spade reveals, nor until fairly recent times were archaeologists much concerned with inquiring into their condition, for instance with asking what sort of labour was employed on the estate of which an excavated villa was the centre. Moreover interpretation of the data is speculative. Close to some villas we find living quarters for the farm hands; were they subject to any form of legal bondage, or merely to social and economic dependence on the owners (Part 7; Whittaker, 1980)? Occasional finds of slave fetters may give a conclusive answer: otherwise it is likely to be dictated by some general theory ultimately derived from a conjectural reading of the meagre literary evidence, if not from Marxist dogmas. Doubts may also arise whether any particular site is typical even for its own region, let alone for the Empire at large. What follows will serve in part to show the uncertainties that beset hypotheses which have been widely received.

Numerous inscriptions from all parts of the Empire attest the existence in towns of associations (*collegia*, *synodoi*) which were formed with the sanction of the state for the celebration of common cults and for social conviviality. Some of them consisted of men engaged within a particular city in the same trade. There was also for instance a *collegium* of shipowners who provisioned Rome. They were certainly capitalists, and it may well be that the members of many other trade associations were employers rather than simple workers; that may be true of the bakers and builders who took some kind of industrial action in Ephesus and Pergamum. They could be required to render public services; the *fabri* (smiths or builders) and *centonarii* (blanket makers) in the west acted as

municipal firemen, and in Egypt industrial associations could be made jointly liable for the provision of supplies needed for the army. In the late Empire *collegia* were the instruments for the regimentation of all kinds of services and supplies required by the state. Obviously men in the same business would discuss their common interests and try to further them by concerted action, but there is no evidence that except perhaps in Egypt they had the legal rights of guilds in later times to regulate prices, wages, conditions of apprenticeship or standards of quality. There were also many associations of *tenuiores* (persons of slender means), primarily burial clubs. Men desired a decent funeral and some memorial ; if they could make no provision for this, their bodies would be cast into a communal pit. The monthly contributions paid to the club assured them against this fate, but they also covered the cost of monthly feasts. The indigent could not have afforded them. The members could indeed include slaves (who needed their masters' consent to join), but with *peculium* slaves might be affluent.

There was of course no system of social security or of such poor relief as the Church later provided, or the parishes in England from the time of Elizabeth I. Only in Rome and later in Constantinople, as the imperial capitals, did the central government make regular distributions of food and occasionally of cash to a fixed number of regular recipients ; in Italy too, which long preserved a privileged position in immunity from direct taxation, it made funds available to the cities from which they could maintain poor children. So far from recognizing any general responsibility to the poor, it imposed a regressive system of taxation; in Egypt the poor were actually liable to poll taxes which the élite were exempted from, or paid at lower rates. Social services were left to the local authorities, and they too did little for the masses. When food was scarce, they might organize supplies and distributions, or try to hold down prices; otherwise there was a danger of riots. They engaged doctors and teachers of literature, rhetoric and philosophy, who also secured from the state valuable privileges such as exemption from taxes and other burdens, but these men charged fees and were often wealthy; they surely served only or principally the members of the upper class to whom they owed their posts. In the east there was heavy expenditure on gymnastics, practised by the youth of the élite. Hardly anything was done for primary education; it is significant that school teachers were denied the privileges granted to those active in higher education. Pagan morality inculcated beneficence, but to one's kin, friends, dependants (including slaves) and fellow-citizens in general, not to the poor as such. By contrast the Christians inherited from the Jewish law and teaching the conception that men had special duties to the poor, and to

widows and orphans (Bolkestein, 1939). Whereas the pagan burial clubs gave benefits only in return for subscriptions, in contemporary Christian communities the richer members succoured their indigent brethren. About 250 the Church at Rome was supporting 1,500 poor persons. It may well be that Christian charity did much to promote conversions (Harnack, 1961, Book II). Once Christianity had become the state religion, it had some effect on public policy in this regard. For the first time hospitals, almshouses and the like are found. Constantine authorized grants from imperial funds for the support of children whom their fathers must otherwise have destroyed or sold as slaves out of sheer want. In 451 Christian emperors proclaimed that it was incumbent on their humanity to care for the needy and ensure that the poor did not want food (*Theodosian Code* XI, 27; *Code of Justinian* I, 2, 12, 2; Jones, 1964, 894–910). Legal servitude, however, was accepted and justified by the Church, which itself owned slaves, as part of the curse of Adam.

In Rome and Italy persons engaged in industry and trade are recorded in hundreds of inscriptions besides those of the *collegia*, notably in epitaphs. Here is a random specimen from Beneventum (*ILS* 7667): Tublius Marcius Philodemus freedman of Publius, plasterer, set up (this tomb) for himself and those who belonged to him (perhaps his freedmen and slaves as well as his family). Here is buried Iucunda, his darling.’ Such documents, which individually tell us little, can be used statistically. Long ago Gummerus, not without some conjectural interpretation of many of the inscriptions, was able to tabulate the status of Italian artisans, many of whom were undoubtedly employers, as follows (*RE* IX 1504 ; cf. Duff, 1958, Chapter VI) :

	Freeborn	Freedmen	Slaves
Rome	27%	66.75%	6.25%
Rest of Italy	46.25%	52%	1.75%

But can it be inferred that the proportion of slaves active in industry was so low as the figures suggest at first sight? Clearly not: the freedmen had surely worked in the same occupations before manumission. The statistics show us not the proportions of freedmen and slaves active at any given time, but at best the proportions of those sufficiently successful to leave records, chiefly at the time of death. There is of course much other evidence for the use of slaves in skilled manual work; for instance the fine arretine ware was manufactured, and the Roman aqueducts were kept in repair, by slaves. But was the share of the freeborn in such employment so

low as the statistics indicate? Not necessarily, as slaves, trained, financed and often in the end liberated by their masters, may have prospered more than their freeborn competitors and have been better able to bear the costs of commemoration. They may also have taken more pride in the skills by which they had risen in the social scale, and been readier to mention them. The elite certainly despised manual labour, and perhaps communicated this prejudice to the humbler freeborn folk, who none the less had no choice but to earn their living in ways of which they felt ashamed. Caution must also be exercised in supposing that slaves and freedmen had the same preponderance in the crafts throughout the provinces, where our information is less copious; it is indeed certain that most workers in Egypt were of free birth, and this is probable for Gaul and Asia. In Rome and Italy there are no data for unskilled workers.

It has often been held that the extensive use of slave labour explains why there was so little technological advance in the Roman Empire (cf. Finley, 1981). The argument goes thus. Slave labour was so cheap that employers had no incentive to search for labour-saving inventions, while the slaves themselves, working reluctantly, would have been incapable of operating any complex machines. Moreover, the association of manual work with slavery so far lowered its esteem that the best minds would not concern themselves with technology, nor indeed with science, whose progress in later times has often been intimately connected with technical advances. None of this can be proved. It is not known how cheap skilled slaves were. The price of slaves must have varied enormously with their age, physique and special qualifications, and very possibly with variations in demand from one place and time to another. The data possessed are too meagre and scattered to justify any conclusions on mean prices for particular categories of slaves even in monetary terms; to determine their real costs, these prices also need to be related to those for essential commodities, for which the data are equally unsatisfactory, and to take account of the decline in the weight and purity of coinage, gradual in the first two centuries of this era and catastrophic thereafter. This undertaking is impossible. It can, however, be confidently stated that skilled slaves had to be rewarded with *peculium* and often with freedom, and that owners could not extract the entire surplus value of their production; whether in fact they were cheaper than hired free workers is uncertain, because no table of wages can be constructed. Even when money wages are recorded, as in Egypt, it is often unclear whether the employer did not provide subsistence in kind as well as cash. Again, arretine ware furnishes ocular proof that slaves could produce the finest work; it is absurd to assume that they could not as in the United States have

operated machines. Seneca actually ascribes to them technical inventions such as translucent glass and shorthand (*Letters* 90, 25). He adds that such inventions were below the dignity of philosophic minds; here is one specimen of aristocratic disdain for manual work. But this disdain, if seldom avowed so candidly, has often been felt by the upper and middle classes in non-slave societies. Ancient slavery cannot bear the responsibility for technological stagnation. So far as the Roman imperial period is concerned, it is also apparent, or arguable, that there was a marked lack of originality in literature and philosophy, and even in law and the arts of government and war, as compared with classical and hellenistic Greece or with the Roman Republic and its Augustan aftermath. In these spheres of activity slavery seems irrelevant; some more general explanation of this strange intellectual inertia is needed.

To return to agriculture, Varro in the first century BC and Columella a century later, describe the management of farms of 50–100 ha (125–250 acres), into which large estates were apparently divided, and which might represent the total holding of the average city councillor, as well as of large-scale ranching operations. They assume that the owners will find it most profitable to employ slave gangs, if they can exercise close supervision, and if the habitat is not so unhealthy (no doubt through the incidence of malaria) that the depreciation rate for slaves is not too high; in that case Varro recommends resort to hired labourers, and Columella leasing to tenants. Though it is in general impossible to be sure how far owners acted in accordance with their prescriptions, the extensive use of slaves as cultivators and herdsmen in Italy is beyond doubt. But Varro and Columella only had Italy in view, and there is no evidence that the practice was universal or common elsewhere, even though instances of it can be found in some provinces such as Africa.

Many modern writers have challenged the correctness of the agronomists' belief that slaves were the most efficient agricultural workers. It is true that ancient accounting methods were so primitive that they may well have had no adequate basis for their opinion, and that agricultural slaves lacked the incentives for good work that operated on urban slaves. However the modern critique was itself founded on the premise that the inefficiency of slave labour had been demonstrated in American plantations, and more modern analysis of the slave economy in the Southern States, even when conducted by scholars hostile on moral grounds to the institution, has subverted, if not refuted, this presumption.

It was certainly uneconomic to rely on the labour of slaves, who had to be continuously maintained, unless they could also be continuously kept at

productive work; this was well understood by the Romans. Hence for the harvest and other major seasonal operations which demanded hands additional to a permanent labour force of slaves free labourers were hired. This practice was not peculiar to Italy: a parable of Jesus pictures men standing idle in the market-place waiting to be hired for the vineyards (*Matthew* 20). Small owners and tenants in the neighbourhood would be ready to supplement in this way the insufficient returns of their own holdings (Garnsey, 1980); and there was probably a pool of casual labour in the towns. There too employers would not maintain slaves for work partly or wholly concentrated in some months of the year. Building was to some extent a seasonal operation; large public works, not only at Rome but elsewhere, were constructed only at intervals, and surely gave unskilled employment at least to the free poor. Maritime trade almost ceased in the winter months; the work of loading and unloading cargo, and in some degree of distributing it, was therefore best left to casual free labour (Brunt, 1980; Treggiari, 1980).

To the Greek and Roman elite a man was not truly free if he depended on wages (Johnson, 1933, 301ff.). It is now often supposed that this conception also prevailed in parts of the Empire not yet hellenized or romanized, and that it was imbibed by the poor, and made it impossible for employers to obtain labour, unless they could subject the labourers to some form of servile status. But the poor could not afford to act on this prejudice, any more than on the objection of the elite to manual work, if the alternative was starvation. Moreover, no one doubts that leasing was common; and tenants might be hardly less dependent than wage-earners on land-owners. It is true that allusions to free wage-earners are sparse, but given the general indifference of ancient writers to the lot of the poor, this has no significance. In particular it matters not at all that the jurists hardly ever refer to wage-earners. They are chiefly concerned with legal issues that came to court. But employers engaged free labourers by the day; they would not sue them for damages they could not pay, if they were unsatisfactory, but would just turn them off. And the labourers had no means to sue for breach of contract. The Epistle of James voices complaints of the labourers whose hire was held back by fraud (5,4); these were age-old in Palestine, but surely not confined to that land. It may be repeated that the status of the greater part of the population in most parts of the Empire is entirely unknown.

Varro actually regarded hired labour as the alternative to slave labour in Italy itself, whereas Columella preferred leasing to tenants. This practice was certainly known in the late Republic, and it is apparent that not all

tenants were small men; they might own slaves, or at least be able to give security for hiring costly equipment as well as the land itself. But no doubt most of them were poor cultivators, apt to fall into arrears with the rent. More is heard about this class from the Principate thanks to Pliny's letters and the survival of more copious juristic texts from this period (Brunt, 1962, 71f.; Neeve, 1984). It is commonly supposed that as the supply of slaves diminished and their prime cost increased, the great land-owners had to rely more on small tenants. If this be so, where did they find them? Probably among those who had hitherto worked on their lands for hire.

It may, however, be an accident in the transmission of evidence that we now hear more of such tenants. There is in fact no direct testimony for a decline in slave numbers, and the data cannot prove a rise in real costs. The jurists of the early third century constantly presuppose the continued importance of slave labour in every branch of the economy; probably they had Italy chiefly in mind. Jones found little attestation of slaves in the late Empire in the provinces, but in most of them that is equally true in an earlier time; again Italy was, he admitted, exceptional (Jones, 1964, 792–803). Thus a decline in slavery certainly affected Italy least, if at all; and the hypothesis that it occurred rests on argument rather than on documentation or its absence. On the orthodox view it was an inevitable result of the cessation, with a few exceptions, of Roman offensive wars after AD 14.

Slaves were either made or born; it is held that most slaves who were made were war-captives, and that breeding could not have kept up the slave population. The last proposition was inferred from experience in the West Indies, where the unhealthy climate caused exceptional mortality (among whites as well as negroes), and where there was little place for female labour in sugar plantations. By contrast in the United States, where women and children as well as men were much employed in the cotton and tobacco fields and in healthy conditions, the slave population more than reproduced itself. To judge from the Roman agronomists, women and children were not much used out of doors, and the opportunities for female labour in domestic service and household textile work were limited. It therefore seems probable that as a result of a deficiency in women slaves breeding could not have kept up numbers (Brunt, 1971, 144, 707). But the diminution in the supply of slaves who were made can easily be exaggerated. Even in the Republic not all war-captives had been made by *Roman* armies (Harris, 1980; cf. Crawford, 1977). Under the Roman peace slaves could still be bought from warring peoples beyond the frontiers, just as in the past Athenians had bought Thracians and Scythians, and as in the

future African tribes themselves supplied the slave markets of America. Moreover, though the freeborn citizens and subjects of Rome were in theory immune from enslavement, in practice exposed children, in Egypt thrown on the dung-heap, could be brought up as slaves; in some areas the sale of children went on, and adults too might sell themselves into slavery; if they 'shared in the purchase price', i.e. if the fictitious vendor gave them part of it as *peculium*, which they would take with them on sale, they could not recover their freedom. With this exception indeed the person born in freedom had a title to recover it, if he could find someone to sue on his behalf and furnish proofs of his birth-right; it is obvious that he could rarely do this, especially if he had been carried off to a place remote from his origin (Jones, 1964, 792–803). It is not known to what extent want forced the poor to abandon or sell their children or even to sell themselves, but it seems to me probable that the supply of slaves from these sources, from the continuance of imports, and from breeding sufficed, not indeed to prevent a decline in numbers, but to make it very gradual, with least effect in Italy, where much wealth was still concentrated.

Granted that there were fewer chattel slaves in the later Empire, it does not follow that as a result the labouring poor were substantially better off. From the second century humble free men had been subjected by the criminal law to servile punishments (Garnsey, 1970, Part II). A great many were now reduced to serfdom, which prefigures and perhaps led on to the feudal villein. It is significant that the very Latin word that denoted 'slave' was to be appropriated to the designation of serfs. As we have seen, serfdom had some important advantages for the victim as compared with slavery, but it offered less hope to a fortunate minority of economic and social advancement. The poor no doubt suffered from the growing anarchy and disruption in the west, and from the general impoverishment. And if slavery was less prevalent than of old, it had not been abolished. In the Byzantine realm it persisted; only in the west did it disappear in a long and mysterious process, which lies beyond our period, and even there not in the Iberian peninsula, whence it was ultimately to be transmitted to the Americas as part of the legacy of Rome.

· SOCIETY · AND · THE · ARTIST ·

T. F. C. Blagg

‘Qualis artifex pereo’, said the Emperor Nero as he contemplated suicide: ‘What an artist dies in me’ (Suetonius, *Nero* 49, 1; Momigliano, 1934, 741). Our concept of the artist is rather different from what the Romans understood by *artifex*. The effects of the Renaissance and the Romantic movement divide us inescapably from the time when little distinction was made between artist and artisan. To the Romans *artifex* described, not only the creator of an original work of art, as we would call it, but also anyone who practised an *ars*, anyone who did work which ‘required a specific technical knowledge and possibly a particular aptitude’ (Calabi-Limentani, 1958, 9–15). Furthermore, *artifex* described both the artist who made a living from his art, and one who practised it for pleasure; no explicit distinction was made between amateur and professional, for example, by Pliny in his discussion of various painters. Nero, like several later emperors, practised painting and sculpture; in that sense, he could fairly describe himself as ‘artifex’, however vain he might have been about his abilities as a performing artist on stage at Olympia and elsewhere.

In other respects, too, Nero’s artistic associations can be taken to typify some of the more important recurrent features of the relationship between art and society in the Roman Empire. They include the enthusiasm for Greek art and culture; the role of imperial patronage in the development of new artistic ideas, for example, in the interior design and wall-paintings of Nero’s Golden House in Rome; the taste for luxury and magnificence which that building also exemplifies; the image-making of imperial portraiture, from the colossal gilded bronze statue of Nero by Zenodorus

which gave the Colosseum its name, down to the careful designs of Nero's coin portraits (pl. 29.1); and the wider public amenities which followed from imperial and aristocratic patronage, exemplified by the well-considered regulations for the rebuilding of Rome after the great fire in AD 64, and by other public buildings: as Martial wrote later, 'What worse than Nero, what better than Nero's Baths?'

The Republican background

The social and political upheavals which led to the establishment of the Principate were accompanied by an equal transformation of Rome's artistic milieu. The deliberate policy of Augustus, assisted in its formulation and execution by Agrippa and Maecenas, was decisive in determining its direction. To demonstrate this, one has only to consider the size of the programme of new building and restoration recorded in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, or the widespread portrait statues of the emperor and the Julio-Claudian family which established the image of the dynasty. In art, as in so many other aspects, the Augustan period established a pattern which was to last until the time of Diocletian and Constantine. In many ways Augustan art was not particularly original, except in the scale of its production and the extent of its diffusion. Several of Augustus' projects were fulfilments of plans initiated by Julius Caesar, to be seen in the context of the artistic activities of late Republican dynasts. However many resources Augustus could draw upon to achieve his artistic policy, its undoubted success was largely based on well-established Republican traditions.

First among them was the essentially public nature of art, particularly in the context of religion (Part 10): cult images of the gods, the moulded terracotta plaques and modelled figures which decorated the temples, the small bronzes and terracotta statuettes which were made for votive offerings. Going back, apparently to the fifth century BC, was the custom of erecting in public places bronze statues, both on foot and equestrian, of those who had deserved honour from the state (pl. 29.2). The triumphs awarded for military victory increasingly became occasions for artistic display. Scipio Africanus' triumph after the battle of Zama (201 BC) included paintings illustrating the campaign, and paintings of other victories were permanently displayed in public buildings in Rome. This taste for narrative depiction of historical events was to find fuller and longer-lasting expression in imperial relief sculpture. By the third century

the display of booty in the triumphal parade was no longer just the captured cattle, weapons and armour of the enemy, but included wagon-loads of gold and silver bullion and plate, and the statues of their gods.

Nearly all the artists who made these works remain anonymous. The credit was given to those, normally magistrates of the Republic, who commissioned them: such, for example, as the brothers Cn. and Q. Ogulnius, who as curule *aediles* in 296 BC used the fines paid to the public treasury to have bronze door frames and silver vessels made for the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, with a statue of him in a chariot for its roof, and who set up in the Forum the famous statue group of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus (Livy X, 23, 11–12).

The public dedication and display of works of art reinforced the ideology of the state, by honouring its religious and military institutions, and providing a continual reminder to the Romans of their past achievements. At the same time, it reinforced the social position of the governing class, whose benefactions, often inscribed with their names, were in constant public view. It was not until the last century of the Republic that members of this class seem to have become similarly ostentatious in their private lives and possessions. That, at any rate, is the Romans' own literary tradition, which stressed the virtue of frugality and simple manners.

So long as this pattern of life predominated, there was little scope for private patronage of artists, except for religious purposes. The noble Roman family's other respectable artistic indulgence was in its ancestral portraits, first mentioned by Polybius in the mid-second century BC. Originally these were masks of wax, modelled and painted as close likenesses of the deceased, kept in wooden shrines in the *atrium*, and brought out and paraded at family funerals, a physical re-creation of the family and its achievements. From this Roman 'obsession with personal immortality' (Bianchi-Bandinelli, 1970, 90), there developed the realistic portrait busts in bronze and marble (pl. 29.3), and the tombstone representations of the dead so characteristic of Roman art throughout the Empire.

The influence of Greek art

A radical change in the balance between public and private artistic expression, and in the place of art and artists in Roman culture and society, resulted from Rome's conquest of the Greeks. When M. Claudius

Marcellus captured Syracuse in 211 BC he brought back for his triumph in Rome many of the most beautiful of the city's art treasures. Later writers saw this as a turning point, and the more conservative Romans did not approve:

The elders blamed Marcellus first of all because he made the city an object of envy, not only by men but also by the gods whom he had led into the city like slaves in his triumphal procession, and second because he filled the Roman people (who had hitherto been accustomed to fighting or farming and had no experience with a life of softness and ease, but were rather, as Euripides says of Herakles, 'vulgar, uncultured but good in things which are important') with a taste for leisure and idle talk, affecting urbane opinions about the arts and about artists, even to the point of wasting the better part of a day on such things. But Marcellus, far from feeling this way, proclaimed proudly even before the Greeks that he had taught the Romans, who had previously understood nothing, to respect and marvel at the beautiful and wondrous works of Greece (Plutarch, *Marcellus* 21, trans. Pollitt, 1983, 32–2)

During the second century, the conquests of Asia, Macedon and Achaea brought in vast quantities of gold and silver coin, plate, statues, paintings, furniture and textiles. Greek art and Greek ideas were not completely unfamiliar to the Romans beforehand, particularly in Campania. Now, however, they became much more accessible, and this was not just the result of spectacular triumphal parades. Rome had an extensive area of the Mediterranean to govern and to exploit commercially. The growing interpenetration of the Greek and Roman worlds is well illustrated by the late second- and first-century BC town on Delos, with its portrait statues of Italian, particularly Campanian, merchants, and the mosaic floors and painted plaster walls of its houses, so closely comparable with those of Pompeii. The profitable slave market on Delos is likely to have been the source of many skilled artists and craftsmen of Greek origin who were acquired by Roman masters.

Increasingly, too, there were occasions for artists to travel freely to Italy, as Romans began to commission works from men whose reputations were sufficiently prized for their names to be thought worthy of commemoration. Metellus, the conqueror of Macedonia in 148 BC, erected the temple of Jupiter Stator, the first marble temple in Rome. To build in this new material, experienced masons had to be brought from Greece. The architect was Hermodorus of Salamis. In the first century BC other such artists

included Pasiteles (pl. 29.4), from one of the Greek cities of southern Italy, who was a sculptor, a modeller in clay, and who wrote treatises on art; Arcesilaus, who made the statue of Venus for Caesar's forum in Rome, and also worked for the wealthy connoisseur Lucullus, and the sculptor C. Avianus Evander, first brought from Athens to Alexandria by Mark Antony as Cleopatra's art adviser, and subsequently an art dealer in Rome (Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVI, 33).

With men drawn from so wide an area, the Greek influences upon Roman art were bound to be eclectic. When Augustus set about his great programme of building in Rome, one feature of it was a conscious evocation of the art of fifth-century Athens, very obviously in the copying of the Erechtheum caryatids for the forum of Augustus, more subtly in the ornamental detail which decorated the buildings (pl. 29.5). Contrast with that, the delicate floral scrollwork on the Ara Pacis, which was inspired by second-century Pergamene fashion. Italy could not provide enough marble masons for the enormous quantity of sculpture and architectural detail involved ; they could only have come, in considerable numbers, from Greece and Asia Minor.

It was not merely that a market developed for the skills of contemporary Greek artists. There was an equal demand by private collectors for work by famous artists of the past, some of which were sold for enormous sums. The orator Hortensius, for example, paid 144,000 *sesterces* for a painting of the Argonauts by the fourth-century artist Kydias, and put up a shrine especially to house it on his estate at Tusculum. The sum paid would have bought enough corn to have fed 320 families for a year. Prices like that, of course, were memorable because they were exceptionally high, but they indicate a market in which the demand greatly exceeded the supply. This was certainly true of sculpture, and the deficiency was met by extensive copying. Fortunately so, in that many works of Greek sculpture are known to us only through these Roman copies. Since the nineteenth century it has become increasingly difficult not to think of a copy as inevitably inferior to the original, but the ancient world did not place so high a value on creative originality. There was no Roman law of copyright. In any case, authentication was difficult; only a minority of artists inscribed their names on their works, and even these were not signatures in the sense of a unique autograph. Nevertheless, some artists' names did have a commercial value: Phaedrus, writing under Tiberius, remarked how contemporary artists secured higher prices by putting Praxiteles' name on their sculpture or that of Zeuxis on their painting. The demand was not only for direct copies, but also for adaptations, like mirror-image copies to make a pair in the

decoration of a room or a garden, and, more creatively, for works which revived earlier styles or were variations on well-known types.

As Greek artistic standards became familiar, and Greek works of art were increasingly sought, both by collectors and by travellers who wished to see them, there developed a considerable literature about Greek art. This brought to Roman acquaintance theoretical writings by such Greek artists and critics as Polykleitos and Xenokrates, and these formed the basis for the way in which Romans themselves thought and wrote about art. It is notable, for example, how many of the technical terms used by Vitruvius in his *De Architectura* are Greek, in addition to most of the ideas about architecture which he expresses. When Latin poets, orators and philosophers wished to typify the artist, they regularly used as their examples, not Romans, but the famous Greeks of the past like the painter Apelles and the sculptor Pheidias (Calabi-Limentani, 1958, 46).

Much of the literature was also concerned with listing masterpieces and what was known about them. Pasiteles, for example, wrote five books on *nobilia opera* and the encyclopedic works of the great scholar M. Terentius Varro (116–27 BC) contained numerous references to artists and their work. Few of these writings have survived, and their contents are mainly known because they were the sources from which the elder Pliny compiled Books XXXIII–XXXVI of his *Natural History*. Pliny, in turn, is an invaluable source of information for us. Without what he wrote about ancient painters, for example, we would know virtually nothing, since none of their work has survived. A few Egyptian panel-portraits, and the evidence of wall paintings and mosaics, can only be faint reflections of those paintings which were of a quality to be worth six-figure sums.

Art collections

The writings of Pliny and his predecessors were produced as a result of the huge number of works of art which were on public display, and of the active market which had developed for the buying and commissioning of works for private collections. For insight into the activities of the connoisseur on the eve of the Principate, Cicero is our most valuable source, unrivalled by any writer of the Principate itself. His prosecution speeches against C. Verres (70 BC) expose a rapacious provincial governor who ransacked Sicily for art treasures; his letters to his friends and family tell us much about his own artistic interests and the building up of his own

collection. Verres reveals at their unscrupulous worst the competitiveness and acquisitiveness which can result from the private ownership of works of art. He was accused of obtaining them by forced gift from their owners, by purchase at well below their true value, and by theft, even from temples: for instance, he was alleged to have sent a gang of armed slaves to remove by night and by force the bronze statue of Hercules from the god's temple in Agrigento (Cicero, *Verres* II, iv, 94–5). Several of his acquisitions came from the collections of Greek citizens of the kind which provided the model for Roman private collecting, such as that of Heius of Messina, which included works by Praxiteles, Myron and Polykleitos, which Verres induced Heius to part with for the ludicrous sum of 6,500 *sesterces*. Some of these collections were themselves of recent origin; another of Verres' victims, Sthenius of Thermae, had acquired Delian and Corinthian bronzes, paintings and fine silver plate when in Asia as a young man. Sthenius illustrates a less selfish aspect of collecting, for Cicero tells us that his purchases were not so much for his own pleasure as for that of fellow citizens and friends who were invited to his house (*Verres* II, ii, 83–5). Clearly, Cicero exaggerates the altruism for the effect of contrast with Verres' lack of it, but there were others who were glad for the public to have access and to admire. Thus, C. Asinius Pollio (76 BC–AD 5) a great literary and political figure of the time of Julius Caesar and Augustus, 'being a man of great enthusiasm, naturally wanted his collection to be seen', and we are told of some of the works which it contained (Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVI, 33).

Unlike Pollio, not every collector was an expert connoisseur, though Cicero need not be taken too seriously when, in his Verrine Orations, he affects an ignorance about artistic matters, to the extent of apparently needing to be reminded of the name of Polykleitos. Here, behind the pretence that it was not proper for a Roman gentleman to know too much about such things, may be detected an unease in Roman society about the opulence and luxury which diehard upholders of traditional Roman virtues, like Cato, considered to be so immoral. It is clear, in fact, that Cicero's taste for and knowledge of objets d'art, and indeed Greek culture as a whole, was particularly well-informed.

Art advisers, agents and dealers, many of them of Greek origin, like C. Avianus Evander (p. 720 above), played a considerable part both in forming taste and in satisfying it. Verres employed a sculptor and a painter from Asia Minor, Tlepolemos and Hieron, as his 'hunting dogs', as Cicero calls them, to scent out objects for his collection. Cicero acquired works of art from Athens through the agency of his friend T. Pomponius Atticus,

who lived there. In the early 60s BC he was furnishing his villa at Tusculum.

He asked Atticus to find him sculpture suitable for the *gymnasium*, a colonnaded courtyard which in Greek usage was associated not only with physical exercise but also with teaching. He was delighted when Atticus sent him Megarian statues and herms of Pentelic marble with heads of bronze 'since Hermes is characteristic of all gymnasia', and one of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was particularly appropriate for Cicero's conscious desire to evoke Plato's Academy. He also asked for relief carvings to decorate his smaller *atrium*, and for ornamental well-heads. A few years later, he is found complaining to another friend, Gallus, who had bought some statues for him which Cicero felt were exorbitantly priced and also unsuitable for his house: what good was a statue of Mars, the god of war, to Cicero, the man of peace? At the same time, he tells Gallus that he wants paintings to decorate some new sitting rooms, declaring that painting is the art which pleases him most.

It is clear from the way in which Cicero and others wrote, and indeed from excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, where art works have been found still in the houses of their owners, that much of the motivation of the Roman collector was inspired, not just by what the object was in isolation, but by how it was to be related to the surroundings in which it was to stand, and to the personality and interests of the owner. Much thought was given to the arrangement of works of art in suitable settings. Vitruvius advised that picture galleries and painters' studios should face north, so that the colours should not be affected by varying sunlight. The Emperor Augustus, who did not much care for private extravagance, preferred his villas to be decorated, not with statues and paintings so much as with natural landscape effects and with old or rare objects like dinosaur bones and the weapons of ancient heroes. In the house of M. Lucretius at Pompeii (pl. 29.6), however, the view from the *atrium* through the *tablinum* led to a little garden with statues of Pan, satyrs, ibises, cupids and dolphins arranged amid the trees and bushes round an ornamental pool, giving the illusion of an escape to a lush mythological landscape beyond the bourgeois walls (Zanker, 1979; Dwyer, 1982).

Public art and display

It was in public buildings and public spaces that works of art were made

most widely accessible. Until the mid-second century BC these collections were mainly the spoils of war, dedicated in temples. Under the Empire, many temples continued to be showplaces of art, particularly of sculpture and painting. The Porticus Metelli seems to have been the first building in Rome designed specifically for the exhibition of art; it was built in the 140s BC by Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, to display the group of thirty-four equestrian bronze statues by Lysippus which portrayed Alexander the Great and the officers who had died at the battle of the Granikos. There were some spectacular temporary exhibitions: Praxiteles' Cupid from Thespiae was displayed in the Roman Forum as the highlight of C. Claudius' magnificent aedileship in 99 BC and three thousand bronze statues were part of the lavish decoration of the theatre built by the aedile M. Aemilius Scaurus in 58 BC and dismantled a few months after construction.

Public buildings in Rome had already assumed something of the character of museums by Augustus' time, and artistic display was a very important constituent of his building programme. This was not restricted to looted treasure and antiquities, but was often an integral part of the propaganda message which was intended. The Forum of Augustus, for example, contained portraits of the famous men of Roman history, going back to Romulus, on one side, and on the other, portraits of members of the Julian *gens* and kings of Alba Longa, starting with Aeneas. The traditions of the City and the new dynasty were linked symbolically in this forum, which surrounded the temple of Mars Ultor, vowed before the battle of Philippi in vengeance for Julius Caesar's murder. Semicircular *exedrae* in opposite sides were constructed specifically for the display of these statues.

Agrippa's speech advocating the nationalization of all statues and paintings (Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV, 26) might suggest that there was less available on the antique market than there had been. Certainly, the somewhat eclectic taste of collectors was being replaced, at an imperial level, by something much more deliberate. Contemporary artists were increasingly involved in assimilating the varied influences of the Greek and Italic past to the new needs of the Roman Principate. The process took some time but, by Trajan's reign, in Bianchi-Bandinelli's view (1970, 229), art had become fully Roman, 'since it gives expression to a new and structurally non-Hellenistic society'.

A particularly important aspect of this is the historical narrative subject matter of Roman relief carving. In place of a Greek frame of reference which was mainly mythological or allegorical, the Roman preference was for specific historical depiction. This was first developed in the late

Republic. Scenes such as the *suovetaurilia* sacrifice on the so-called Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, or the procession of senators and the imperial family on the Ara Pacis (pl. 29.7), prepare the artistic ground for that most original visual record of a historical episode, the spiral relief of the Dacian campaign on Trajan's column.

A key feature of this process of communication from the emperors, through artists, to the people, is the recognizable imperial image. On coins, a triumphal arch with trophies of war and 'de britann' or 'de iudaeis' could inform the whole Empire of Claudius's triumph (pl. 29.8) over the Britons (AD 43) or Vespasian's over the Jews (AD 70). The latter was made even more specific in the reliefs on the arch of Titus, depicting the triumphal chariot turning the corner of the Via Sacra, and the parade of treasure from Jerusalem, including the seven-branched candlestick, the originals of which could be seen exhibited in the Forum Pacis nearby (pl. 29.9). But even as far away from Britain as Aphrodisias, in Asia Minor, a relief on the Sebasteion showed Claudius overwhelming Britannia (pl. 29.10), represented as a fallen Amazon (Erim, 1982). Claudius appears as a Greek hero, nude save for helmet and cloak, but with a recognizably Claudian face.

As this last example shows, the image conveyed its message in two ways: directly, through the representation of recognizable individuals, objects and surroundings; and symbolically, by the use of mythological or allegorical figures or references.

Roman sculptors thus evolved a mode of expression which had two complementary levels of meaning. Allegory was used to interpret the significance of the real events portrayed. The divine associations claimed by Roman emperors, or accorded to them after their deaths, were conveyed in a similar manner. Sometimes, emperors were portrayed with the attributes of the particular gods with whom they identified themselves; so, for example, a bust of Commodus shows him, rather unconvincingly, in the guise of Hercules, wearing the Nemean lion's skin and brandishing a club (pl. 31.6). A rather more subtle use of artistic representation is recorded by Herodian of the emperor Antoninus Elagabalus, who accustomed the Roman Senate and People to his Syrian dress and his cult of the god Elagabalus, whose high priest he was, by sending to Rome a full-length portrait showing himself wearing that costume, and in the act of sacrifice. The result was that when he eventually arrived in the City for the first time, the Romans were sufficiently used to the idea not to be scandalized, as the emperor's grandmother Julia Maesa had feared that they would be.

Various ideas were current in antiquity about the function of portraiture.

In one view, it was to show what a person's nature had been. Plutarch says that he saw a stone statue of Marius in Ravenna 'which successfully conveys his reputedly morose and bitter character'. The imperial image, as officially projected, was often more complicated, and certainly did not remain constant. Augustus successfully established an idealized image of himself and the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Such, presumably, was the image which Suetonius had in mind when he wrote of Nero that 'he did not take the least trouble to look as an emperor should'. In fact, Nero paid very careful attention to his portrait images, but was reverting to hellenistic ideas of how a ruler should appear (Strong, 1976, 45–8 and 64).

Like Nero, Hadrian was a noted philhellene, and his adoption of a beard, in the manner of a Greek philosopher, and the careful styling of the hair in his portraits, reflects the interest of such Greek writers as Dio Chrysostom and Polemon of Laodicea in physiognomy. Hadrian set a fashion which was followed and elaborated by the Antonine emperors. In the late third century the varied types of portraiture of the Tetrarchs, particularly on their coinage, are to be explained as the results of a search for an appropriate new manner of representing the concept of the emperor as *Dominus Noster*, Our Lord. The increasing remoteness and unapproachability of the holders of imperial office was emphasized by Diocletian's introduction of elaborate court ceremonial derived from Persia, and by representations of emperors which paid more attention to the regalia of their office than to the physical characteristics of the individual (pl. 29.11).

A statue conveyed the idea of the physical presence of the person represented. It might indeed be thought of and treated as being that person. For many Greeks, a statue of a god did not just represent the god: it *was* the god (Gordon, 1979, 7–8). Something of this apparent ambiguity persisted under the Roman Empire. After the death of Faustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius, in 175, the Senate decreed that a golden statue of her should always be carried into the theatre when the emperor attended, to be placed in the front seats which she had occupied when alive, and that ladies of the highest rank should surround it, as they had attended her when alive. Conversely, should the memory of an unpopular emperor be officially condemned after his death, as Domitian's was, the posthumous penalty was exacted by erasing his name from inscriptions and defacing his portraits. The arch erected by the *argentarii* of Rome (pl. 29.12) in honour of Septimius Severus and his family, for example, retains the traces of where the figure of Severus' elder son Geta had been chiselled away after his murder. Symbolically he, like Domitian, had become a non-person. The same considerations applied to the statues of any notable. The erection of a

statue was a token of honour, and the statue was liable to suffer for the individual's subsequent dishonour. Septimius Severus, feeling that there were rather too many statues of his praetorian prefect Plautianus, ordered that some of them be melted down. This gave rise to a rumour of Plautianus' downfall. That was to happen sometime later, but meanwhile many cities reacted prematurely and demolished his statues, and were punished for doing so.

With this great profusion of works of art on public view, it is small wonder that Pliny complained that there was not leisure and opportunity for the quiet contemplation necessary for their proper appreciation. His references to the considerable number of works by Praxiteles, Skopas and others which were displayed in Rome and were greatly admired shows that then, as now, masterpieces by famous artists were singled out for particular attention. In the second century AD Pausanias wrote a guide to Greece which is full of references to celebrated works of art which were popular tourist attractions. The appreciation of art was not confined to the rich. Even slaves might study paintings intently, though they acquired a bad character by spending their time in doing so (*Digest*, xxi, 1, 65).

Reverent appreciation was not universal. Statues might suffer from the nocturnal urinations of philistine revellers (Juvenal, *Satires*, I, 131; VI, 310). More seriously, they might be stolen, or have the gilt scraped off them. When 900 kg (2,000 lb) of gold was found to be missing from the throne of Capitoline Jupiter in 52 BC the custodian committed suicide in anticipation of the investigation. Temple treasures were normally protected behind strongly bolted doors, and occasionally by guard dogs. Consequently, temples served as the equivalent of bank strongrooms, in which the money and jewels of private individuals were deposited.

In most towns of the Empire, the *aediles* or equivalent junior magistrates were responsible for the care and maintenance of public buildings, and the works of art which they contained. In Rome itself, during the Empire, there were senatorial *curatores* of sacred buildings and public works, with a large staff of assistants (*procuratores* or *sub-curatores*), some of whom were given responsibility for particular buildings (Gordon, 1952, 279–304). A late second-century inscription records a *procurator* for paintings (*a pinacothecis*). Constantine established a *curator* of statues, subordinate to the city prefect. Little is known about what the actual responsibilities of such people involved, and how they were carried out. Pliny and Pausanias tell us about some methods of conservation used in particular cases (Strong, 1973, 261–2). One of the skills of Avianus Evander ([p. 720 above](#)) was in restoring damaged parts of famous ancient statues. For more routine

maintenance, there must have been many such craftsmen as M. Rapius Serapio, whose job it was to replace missing glass eyes in bronze statues. For temple collections, daily care was the responsibility of the custodians (*aeditui*), who were normally public slaves.

These custodians had what was no doubt a profitable sideline in telling visitors about the art treasures in their care, and in any town a traveller could expect the attentions of self-appointed local guides to inform them, or misinform them, about the works of art which they could see there. As Pausanias remarked: ‘the guides at Argos know very well that not all that they tell people is true, but they say it just the same.’ Educated men like Plutarch and Lucian might deplore or satirize the endless patter and the insistent touting of local guides, but it must be remembered that they were the only source of information for most ordinary people, who did not have access to tourist guidebooks or works of scholarship (Casson, 1974, 264–71).

Art and the private patron

Roman art reveals to us in a very direct way the Romans’ own view of themselves, both as a society and as individuals. It does so, in particular, through their highly developed and realistic portraiture, and through a taste for the depiction of scenes from daily life in sculpture and painting. The Republican origins of this, as a manifestation of an artistic ‘obsession with personal immortality’, have been mentioned ([p. 718 above](#)). Under the Empire, the opportunities for such private artistic patronage extended well beyond the upper class, and throughout the provinces. They are revealed especially in works commissioned for religious dedication and for the commemoration of the dead.

In the ancient sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, for example, a former slave, the actor C. Fundilius Doctus, erected fine marble statues of his patroness Fundilia, to whom or to whose family he had formerly belonged, and of himself (Poulsen, 1973, 113–14 and *pis cxxxvii–cxxxix*). Art and religion served both to express the particular social relationship, and also to exemplify the evolution of Roman society which enabled an ex-slave to afford, to commission and publicly to display works of this nature and quality.

The tombstone of another ex-slave, that of Regina at South Shields ([pl. 29.13](#)), is an eloquent testimony to the social and geographical penetration

of Roman artistic ideas. She was a native British tribes woman who had been emancipated and married by a Syrian armourer from Palmyra. The sculptor must have come from the same area, for he portrayed Regina seated beneath a Syrian pediment, and added an inscription in Palmyrene script below the Latin (Phillips, 1977, no. 247).

The relief carving on tombstones publicly advertised the lives and achievements of those who could afford them, from senators down to auxiliary soldiers and tradesmen. Sometimes we have simply a portrait of the dead person, dressed appropriately to his or her status: a centurion in armour, with his battle decorations; a citizen in his toga; a woman with her hair dressed to follow imperial fashion or the local style of the region. Reliefs showing the dead person reclining on a couch, with food and drink for the funerary banquet on a table, a servant and often members of the family in attendance, are common from Britain to the Black Sea. They are specific to the ritual of death; what was noteworthy about the life was recorded on the inscription.

One special characteristic of Roman art is its close connection with the realities of daily life (Bianchi-Bandinelli, 1970, 62) and Romans particularly liked their tombs to express what their lives had been. A shipwright in Ravenna is shown adzing a timber for the boat which he is building (pl. 29.14); a miller's tombstone from Narbonne shows the donkey mill and his faithful dog. Tombs of merchants at Igel and Neumagen in Germania (pls 13.12, 13 and 29.15) were carved with scenes connected with the cloth trade: the cloth being examined and transported, and accounts being rendered by men in Gaulish dress (Drinkwater, 1981); and such more intimate scenes as a woman sitting having her hair dressed in front of a mirror.

The care which a patron might take to ensure that his requirements were satisfied is illustrated by an inscription from Langres of a Gaulish citizen, which specifies that his tomb was to be made according to an exemplar already given, with a seated statue in the best marble from overseas, or of the best bronze, no less than five feet high, and that the coffin was to be of the best Luna marble and decorated with the best workmanship (*sculpta quam optime*) (Calabi-Limentani, 1958, 145–6). Such desires might be pretentious, and were wittily satirized by Petronius in describing Trimalchio's instructions for what was to be carved on his tomb, including merchant ships under full sail, and a scene of people enjoying themselves at the public banquet for which he had paid.

Petronius also has the self-satisfied Trimalchio displaying paintings in his house which depicted the stages in his rise to fortune. Normally,

however, wall-paintings and mosaics in houses illustrated in a more general way the aspects of the owners' daily lives in which they took pleasure, particularly the gladiatorial games, hunting, erotic scenes and the landscape (pl. 29.16). According to Pliny, Spurius Tadius, in Augustus' principate, was the artist who began the painting of landscapes of varied scenery set with buildings and with nicely observed representations of people travelling through them, fishing, hunting or harvesting grapes. In a very literal way, this was putting into practice the Platonic doctrine that art was essentially an imitation of nature. There was also a taste for paintings of mythological subjects, which told a story. The Elder Philostratus, late in the second century AD, wrote in his *Eikones* descriptions of paintings which, although composed as literary exercises, clearly reflect the sort which we know from Pompeii and Herculaneum, and tell us much about what people looked for in pictures. As his grandson, the Younger Philostratus, tells us in his own *Eikones*, there were also those who sought in art not only the well-observed imitation of the natural world or a narrative entertainment, but also an expression of the invisible underlying reality and psychological insight on the part of the artist (Pollitt, 1983, 213–27; Gordon, 1979, 15).

Whatever the tastes and theories which determined the forms which it took, the function of Roman art was essentially ostentatious. The role of the artist was to produce work through which the owner could display his wealth, culture and importance. High in the scale of luxury was the use of imported marble for the embellishment of houses, first of all in those of late Republican magnates. Lucius Crassus, consul in 95 BC, was the first to have columns of foreign marble (from Hymettos) in his house. Fifty years later Mamurra, who had made a fortune while chief engineer for Julius Caesar in Gaul, had his house walls faced in marble veneer throughout, and columns of solid marble: green-veined Carystian from Euboea, and white from the newly-opened quarries of Carrara in northern Tuscany. The palace at Fishbourne in Britain illustrates the influence of these standards upon provincial architecture. The white and coloured marbles used for wall veneers and flooring came from the Pyrenees, the Garonne, Burgundy, Carrara, the Greek islands and Turkey (Cunliffe, 1971, 1–35). Those who could not afford marble might have the effects of veneer imitated in wall-painting. The coloured mosaics and wall-paintings of the town houses and rural villas of Italy and the provinces were in themselves, independently of their subject matter, an indication of the status of the occupants.

So, too, but at a more personal level, were the products of silversmiths and gemcutters. There was an enormous quantity of silver plate in private possession during the Empire, in contrast with the Republic (p. 718 above),

and it was by no means confined to the very wealthy (Strong, 1966, 124–5). Finds like the Boscoreale treasure of 109 pieces of table and display silver (pl. 30.4), or the 118 items found in a chest in the House of the Menander at Pompeii, were the possessions of middle-class Italian provincial families. One was regarded as poverty-stricken indeed not to have any family silver on the table (Suetonius, *Domitian*, 1). Much silver was made for dedication at temples. For many families, the silversmith was probably the type of *artifex* with whom they had the most dealings. Some of the craftsmen signed their pieces: the Boscoreale treasure includes a mirror by M. Domitius Polygnos and a cup by Sabinus.

Chased and engraved gold and silver plate was highly prized, and some metalsmiths achieved reputations as high as those of painters and sculptors. Indeed, there were artists who were skilled in more than one capacity: Pasiteles and Avianus Evander (p. 720 above) were, like the Renaissance artist Benvenuto Cellini, both sculptors and metalsmiths. Two silver cups found at Hoby in Denmark are examples of the high-quality work produced for an aristocratic patron. One shows Priam and Achilles, the other Odysseus and Philoctetes; the name of the maker, Cheirisophos, appears on the former in Greek and on the latter in Latin letters, and beneath them is the name Silius, quite possibly the C. Silius who was governor of Upper Germany in AD 14–21 (Tacitus *Annales*, I, 31; Toynbee, 1951, 52).

The art of gem-cutting, too, was so highly valued that it cannot be considered merely as one of the minor arts. Seal rings, in particular, were items of particular significance to those who wore them; Augustus used three at different times. The last, which bore his own head and was used as a seal by subsequent emperors, was engraved by Dioskourides, a craftsman of outstanding skill (pl. 29.17). Several gems signed by him survive, and also some which were cut by his sons (Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVII, 8).

Artists and their work

Dioskourides is one of the rare examples of a Roman artist of whom we know something from literature, and of whose work some identifiable examples survive. Altogether, we have the names of about 400 artists (Calabi-Limentani, 1958, 181–93 ; see also Toynbee, 1951), but in most cases they are known only from an isolated work on which their name appears, an inscription which mentions them, or a reference in literature. Only rarely do these sources supplement one another. It is therefore

virtually impossible to reconstruct the way in which the artistic career of any individual developed. More general remarks can be made about the social position of artists and the nature of their working life.

Men of high social standing might practise the arts. Among emperors, in addition to Nero's claims to be an *artifex* (p. 717), Hadrian was an accomplished painter, and if we are to believe Aurelius Victor as a sculptor in bronze or marble he was nearly a Polykleitos or a Euphranor. One senses, however, that while aristocrats might learn such skills as part of a liberal education, they rarely sought or achieved what we might call a professional competence. Nor was it thought respectable or necessary for them to do so. Pliny the Elder considered that his contemporary Turpilius, an *eques* from near Verona, was almost as exceptional among men of his class for painting beautifully as he was for being the first recorded artist to do so left-handed (Pliny, *Natural History* XXXV, 20).

That is not to say that artists in themselves were socially despised, but that they were not expected to be of the highest social rank. They might, indeed, achieve social positions of honour and respect. So, for example, the mosaicist P. Aelius Harpocraton, *alias* Proclus, was honoured by the erection of a statue of himself at Perinthus in Thrace, where he had decorated the Tycheum, where he settled and died, and where his son, also named Proclus and a mosaicist, was a member of the local senate (*CIG* II, 2024, 2025; Toynbee, 1951, 43–4).

Inscriptions do not always specify whether an artist with the *tria nomina* of a Roman citizen was freeborn or a manumitted slave. Among artists of freeborn citizen status, architects form the largest single group, and half of them were associated with the army. Nearly half of the artists known from inscriptions, however, appear to have been *liberti* (Calabi-Limentani, 1958, 38–42). An appreciable number were slaves, some of whom belonged to other artists. Both slave and freedmen artists might be attached to the household of an aristocratic patron of the arts like C. Sallustius Crispus, who emulated Mae-cenas and who, or whose namesake, possessed as painters the slave Amanus and the *libertus* Ajax. In the *columbarium* of the slaves and freedmen of the Empress Livia, the slaves included painters, goldsmiths, and those concerned with statues, portraits, silver and pearls (some of whom may have been custodians rather than craftsmen). Justinian's *Digest* contains a variety of legal texts which relate to the obligation on the part of the vendor of a slave to demonstrate any literary or artistic qualities claimed for him, which no doubt had enhanced the price (e.g. *Digest* xxi, 1, 19, 4).

The names of many of these artists, both slave and free, indicate a Greek

origin. The Greek artists attracted to Italy in the late Republic (p. 720 above) were followed under the Empire by numerous artists who worked far from home, and not only in Italy (Toynbee, 1951, 25–7). Thus, the elder Proclus went from Egypt to Thrace. Criton of Athens, whose name is inscribed on the bull from the Mithraeum at Ostia, must have gone there to carve it, since the marble is Italian. Zenodorus, who made Nero's colossus (p. 717 above), had previously made an equally gigantic statue of Mercury for the Gaulish nation of the Arverni, which apparently took ten years to complete; in Aquitania, he also achieved note by making replicas of two silver cups by Kalamis for the governor of the province.

Nor was the travelling all from the Greek world. A mosaic at Lillebonne, in northern Gaul, was made by T. Sennius Felix from Puteoli and his pupil, who may have come from Carthage. From such immigrants classical artistic skills were learned by the provincials of the western Empire. Annaeus Atticus, buried in the Isola Sacra cemetery in Ostia, was a painter from Aquitaine (Toynbee, 1951, 42). Priscus, whose Gaulish homeland was in the region of Chartres, was a stonemason who dedicated an altar at Bath. The full assimilation of classical traditions by native provincial artists in the west is illustrated by the Jupiter column at Mainz, carved by the Gaulish sculptors Samus and Severus, the sons of Venicarus.

Roman artists were almost invariably men. The one woman of whom we know anything is Iaia, a Greek from Cyzicus, who worked in Rome c. 100 BC and who had a high reputation for painting on ivory, mainly portraits of women (Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV, 147–8). Women might act as artists' models. The painter Arellius was notorious for painting goddesses who looked like his mistresses, and several prostitutes were thus immortalized. But there is little information about the use of models, male or female. That they were usually employed is implicit in Seneca's apocryphal story of how the painter Parrhasius tortured an Olynthian slave to death in order to depict the agonies of Prometheus; we need not believe that this actually happened, for Seneca's point was rhetorical, concerning the use of artistic imagination to achieve realistic effect.

On another occasion, Seneca wrote about the motives of an artist in creating his work: money, if he had made it for sale; glory, if he was working for his own reputation; or religion, if he had prepared a temple gift. To a large extent, the social conditions of artists determined the degree to which they could work for their own satisfaction. Only the very rich, like Sallustius Crispus, could retain artists in their own households to work exclusively for them. Most other artists worked independently, as family groups (Toynbee, 1951, 18–19), like Dioskourides and Proclus and their

sons, or in an *officina* or workshop (particularly sculptors: *CIL* VIII, 4779 and 21082; *AE*, 1946, 77 and 90; 1951, 51). Then they might work to contract (*locatio*: cf. *Digest* xix, 5, 5, 2), or produce objects for sale ready-made. And there were those who made works on their own account, to dedicate at temples, like the bronze plaque from Colchester dedicated to Silvanus by the *aerarius* Cintusmus: appropriate returns to the gods for their artistic gifts.

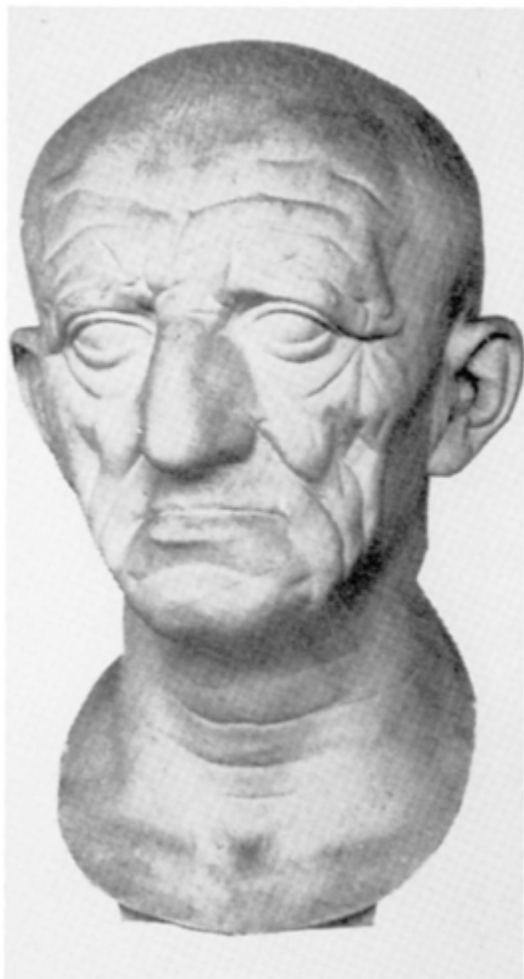
Some great artists, like Dioskourides, achieved a fame which is recorded for us in the writings of their contemporaries. Some sculptors and painters showed their pride in their craft by portraying themselves in action, or the tools of their trade, commemorating their own achievements in the same way as they were employed to commemorate those of their patrons (pl. 29.18). The patron's gratitude might also immortalize the artist. When the freedman metalsmith M. Canuleius Zosimus died at the age of 28, his patron set up his funerary urn, carved with an inscription which praised his surpassing skill as an engraver, his agreeable temperament, his obedience to his master's wishes, and his honesty, despite the tempting weight of precious metals on which he worked (*ILS*, 7695). Nothing is known of the gold and silverware which Zosimus actually made; his epitaph may serve as that of the countless and nameless artists whose work has come down to us, and as an appreciation of the value to Roman society of their achievements and loyal service.



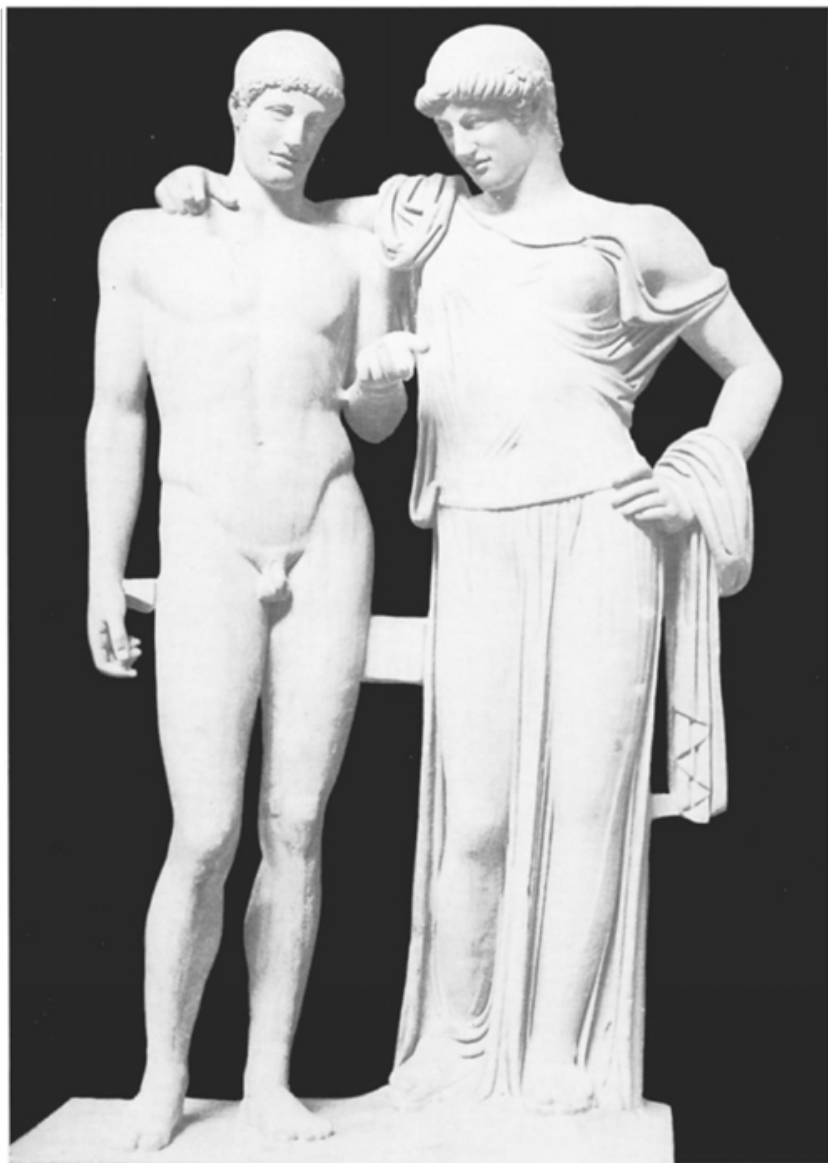
29.1 *Aureus* of Nero



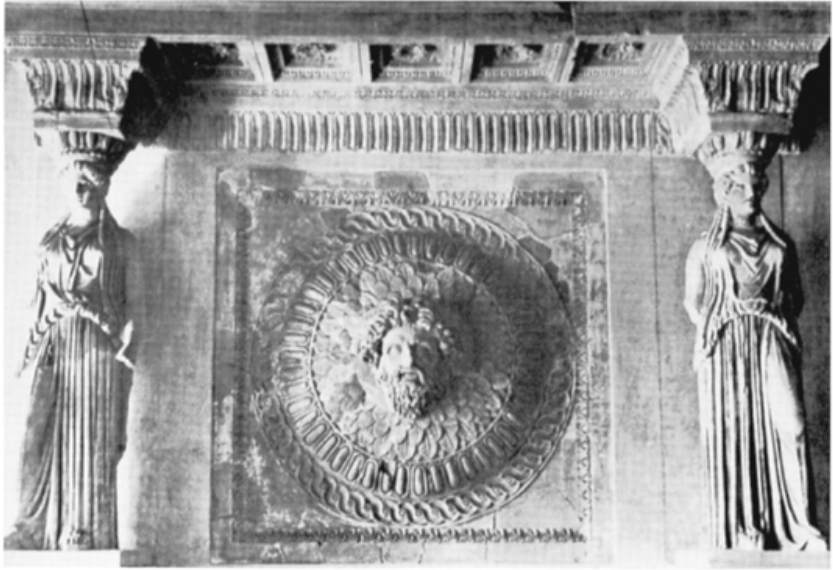
29.2 Bronze statue of Aulus Metellus



29.3 Portrait of a Roman patrician, Rome



29.4 Marble statues: 'Orestes and Electra' from the school of Pasiteles



29.5 Caryatids from the Forum of Augustus, Rome



29.6 Garden of the House of M. Lucretius, Pompeii



29.7 Procession of the Imperial Family on the Ara Pacis, Rome



29.8 *Aureus* of Claudius with a triumphal arch inscribed DE BRITANN



29.9 The Arch of Titus, Rome. Relief showing the triumphal procession



29.10 Relief carving from Aphrodisias showing Claudius overcoming Britannia



29.11 Follis of Diocletian



29.12 Septimius Severus and Julia Domna in a relief on the Arch of the Argentarii, Rome



29.13 Tombstone of Regina from South Shields, Britain. Regina was the wife of a Palmyrene and her memorial was decorated in the eastern manner



29.14 Shipbuilding scene from the tombstone of P. Longidienes, Ravenna



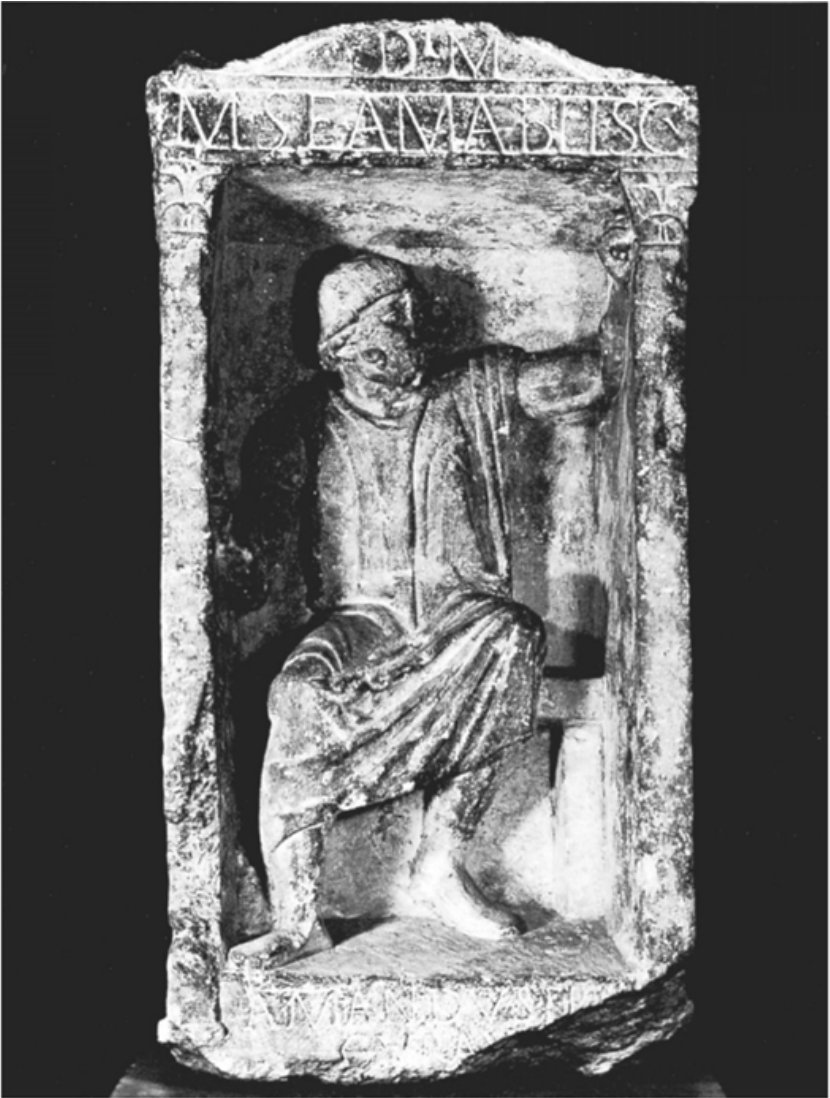
29.15 Scene showing payment and accounting from a tomb at Neumagen, Germany



29.16 Landscape painting from the House of the Small Fountain, Pompeii



29.17 Cornelian intaglio, showing a Trojan scene, and signed by Dioskourides



29.18 Tombstone of the sculptor M. Se . . . Amabilis from Bordeaux

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PART 10

· RELIGION · AND · BURIAL ·

· CLASSICAL · RELIGIONS ·

John Ferguson

The nature of Roman religion

There is no Latin word for religion. The closest is the phrase *cultus deorum*, derived from the more concrete *colere deos*, ‘worshipping the gods’. *Religio*, from which our English word derives, is itself a puzzle. It may have something to do with a root meaning ‘bind’. Its negative seems to be *negligere*, ‘to neglect’. Often it means ‘superstition’. *Caerimonia*, from which we derive our word ‘ceremony’, is also puzzling. Its root is unknown, and it is often found in the plural. *Pietas*, the origin of ‘piety’, has a very different connotation. It stands for a sense of duty, to other members of the family, or within the extended family, or within the state, or within other contractual relations. It is not a religious word except in so far as all those relations are religious, and protected by gods. *Sacer*, our ‘sacred’, means ‘set apart for or by the gods’, in blessing or cursing. In a sacrifice, *sacrificium*, the animal or other offering is made over to the gods. There is an early distinction, difficult to analyse precisely, between *sacer*, dedicated to a god, *sanctus*, which is applied to gates and walls, set under divine protection for the defence of those within, and *religiosus*, dedicated to the underworld powers. All are under supernatural protection ; a temple is *sacer*, a gate *sanctus*, a tomb *religiosus*. *Fas* has to do with that which is religiously permitted, as *ius* with that which is legally permitted; the ancients derived it from a root meaning ‘speak’ ; it is perhaps thus connected with *fatum*, ‘fate’. Days were *fasti* or *nefasti* according to

whether they were or were not propitious for public business.

Georges Dumézil in his book (*Servius et la Fortune*, 1943) drew a series of contrasts between the Romans and the Indians, which helps us to identify the nature of Roman religion. The Romans think *historically*, the Indians *fabulously*. The Romans think *rationally*, the Indians *cosmically*. The Romans think *practically*, the Indians *philosophically*. The Romans think *relatively*, *empirically*, the Indians *absolutely*, *dogmatically*. The Romans think *politically*, the Indians *morally*. The Romans think *juridically*, the Indians *mystically*.

Roman religion has to do with action rather than belief, though of course action implies underlying beliefs. There were no credal affirmations. The object of religious practice was to secure the *pax deorum*. *Pax* is our 'peace'; the phrase implies benevolent relations between gods and the Romans; it may be loosely translated 'the favour of the gods'. Roman religion consisted in large part of seeking and observing the signs indicative of the approval or disapproval of the gods, and taking the right steps to secure their approval. The legalism with which this might be carried out is seen in a story in Livy (i, 9, 10). The Romans had been defeated by the Samnites and capitulated shamefully. He advised the Senate to send him back to repudiate the agreed terms. As they reached the Samnite camp he physically assaulted the escorting priest, crying 'I am a Samnite; I have maltreated an envoy in transgression of the law of nations. The Roman will now have the juster cause in making war.' The gods accepted the legal fiction, and in the renewed fighting the Samnites were defeated. The legalism is pervasive. In the rituals of Iguvium any error meant going back to the starting-point of the procession. Rome had once to repeat the whole ritual of the Festival of the Latin League because of an omission of a phrase in a prayer. Divine law paralleled civil law.

Archaic religion

The three great gods of the earliest Roman religion which can be traced are indicated by the precedence of their priests, and by their presence in archaic formulas.

Jupiter is the Indo-European Dyaus and the Greek Zeus with 'father' added. He is certainly a sky-god, though there have been other theories. He is sovereign among the gods. Thunder and lightning are his. He is the guardian of the oath, for he sees all and strikes down the perjurer. The Ides,

the day of the mid-month, are his. He presides over the wine-festival of the Vinalia; no fully convincing explanation of this has been given. He was at almost all times the great god of the Roman people.

Mars is clearly the god of war. But he also is found in early agricultural ritual. Whether this is because the soldier-god is the best protector of crops, or because he was in origin a storm-god with a readily understood double function, or because his month of March began both the campaigning and the farming seasons, or for other reason is not clear. His domain is naturally outside the city.

Quirinus may be derived from *co-vir*, men in society; *curia*, the meeting of those taking action for the state, and Quirites, the citizen-body, are probably cognate. Some scholars would have him a kind of doublet of Mars, but his association is with the citizens at peace. Later theorists identified him with the deified Romulus, founding father of Rome.

This triad was replaced, under Etruscan influence, by a new, less masculine triad. Jupiter remained supreme. He was to become Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Best and Greatest), and his great temple stood on the Capitoline Hill. There he gave hospitality to two goddesses. Juno, the Etruscan Uni, is the power of fertility in women who presides over childbirth and over women's festivals. The first day of the month is hers, the rebirth of the moon. But she has other power too. She was brought from Veii as Regina or Queen; as Populonia she blesses the people under arms; as Sispes she protects the state. Minerva, the Etruscan Menrva, is the patron of all arts and crafts.

Two other early deities call for special mention. They are Janus, who comes first in prayers and offerings. His name may be linked with the idea of a gate or passage, and for this reason looks both ways. He is the god of beginnings; he presides over January, the first month of the revised calendar. He has to do with openings and closings; his temple was opened in war and closed in peace. Vesta comes at the end in prayers and offerings. She is certainly the goddess of the hearth, and of the sacred fires of the state.

The antiquarians of Rome distinguished between *di indigetes*, native gods, and *di novensiles*, the immigrant gods. The great German scholar, Georg Wissowa, identified thirty-three 'indigenes', though two of them, the Lares of the estate, and the Lemures of the dead, are plural. The names of ten deities who have priests called *flamines* in addition to Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus are known. They make curious reading: Voltumnus, Pales (a shepherds' god), Furia, Flora (the spirit of flowers), Falacer, Pomona (the fruitfulness of autumn), Vulcanus (volcanic fire), Ceres (the power of

growth in crops), Portunus. They were not, for the most part, the great deities associated with later times; they were pushed aside by the immigrant Greek powers, though no doubt they lingered on in the more conservative countryside.

The religion of farm and home

The religion of farm and home was not identical with that of the state, though the *pontifex maximus* and his colleagues exercised a controlling authority over private cult, maintaining traditions and resisting innovations. The antiquarian Festus defined private cult as pertaining to individuals, households and ancestral families.

The Lares and Penates were at the centre of private cult. The Lares seem to have been spirits of the farmland and associated with the ancestors buried there. The *hares compitales* were honoured where different estates met. The *Lar familiaris* (pl. 30.5) came into the home with the *familia*, the whole workforce of the estate. The private shrine in the home was called *lararium*. The Penates are spirits of the pantry. To these must be added Vesta, the power of the private hearth as of the public; offerings were made to her at every meal. The Genius was the power of fertility in the male. This was believed to reside in the head of the father of the family, but is sometimes portrayed as a snake, coming from the underworld of the ancestors. The Genius was honoured at family festivals. The *lararium* might contain representations of other deities honoured in the household. In Pompeii the *lararia*, generally of the first century BC or AD, have revealed in painting twenty-seven deities, most frequently Fortuna (12), Vesta (10), Bacchus (8), Amor (7), Jupiter (7), Mercury (6), Hercules (6). Statuettes, apart from the Lares, depict most frequently Mercury (14), Minerva (11), Venus (10), Jupiter (8), Hercules (7); the Egyptian gods also appear. At nearby Herculaneum, with more warning, during the eruption the statuettes were removed to safety.

Private cult was also structured round the great passage-rites of birth, marriage and death. Here is encountered the curious phenomenon of spiritual powers of limited scope, numerous in number and presiding over small operations. They were often called *numina*. So at birth there were different powers looking after the foetus, presiding over the critical ninth and tenth months, guiding parturition, bringing the babe to the light. There was a magical ritual driving away evil spirits with axe, stake and broom,

and invoking Cleaver, Staker and Sweeper. Other powers watched over the cradle, induced the first cry, blessed breast-feeding, guided eating and drinking, helped the child to speak or to stand, and guarded the child's going-out and coming-in.

On the farm too, Earth and Ceres (the power of growth) were invoked together with First Plougher, Second Plougher, Harrower, Sower, Top-dresser, Hoer, Raker, Harvester, Gatherer, Storer, Distributor. Spiniensis was responsible for digging out thorn bushes, and Sterculius for manuring. The persistent rituals to Robigus, the spirit of disease in grain, are also known.

These powers were somewhat impersonal. Others, who later became fully fledged gods and goddesses, seem to have affinities with them. Pales, the shepherds' god, is indifferently masculine or feminine. The very name of Venus, a garden-spirit originally, is neuter in form. Names such as Neptunus, Portunus, Saturnus are adjectival in form and seem to relate to functions.

There are some vivid and often beautiful word-pictures of agricultural ritual: the Ambarvalia, a ritual procession of pig, ram and bull round the bounds to purify the land (pl. 30.1); the poet Tibullus too tells us of this holy day and holiday with a stress on purity, cleanness and white. Ovid describes the Terminalia in honour of Terminus, the power of the boundary-stone, with the offerings of lamb and sucking-pig, grain, honey and wine. There is a late record of an ancient ritual for protecting the crops, with a triple invocation of Mars (or Marmar) and the Lares (or Lases). Not for nothing did Vergil write of *divini gloria ruris*, the glory of the gods' own countryside (*Georgics* 1, 168).

Priesthood and other religious officials

In the early history of Rome it can be deduced that the king stood as intermediary between the human and the divine. After the establishment of the Republic the *Rex Sacrorum* was the *Pontifex Maximus* or King of the Ceremonies maintained the title. The chief religious official or Supreme Bridge-builder. Most scholars think that this reflects the solemnity and importance of bridge-construction over a turbulent river rather than the more metaphysical bridging of earth and heaven. These priestly officers did not undergo any special training nor hold dogmatic beliefs, nor live in particular sanctity. Julius Caesar, a known unbeliever, became *pontifex*

maximus.

There were fifteen priests known as *flamines*, probably ‘sacrificers’. The three senior were attached to Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. The *flamen Dialis* or priest of Jupiter lived a life restricted by tabus. He might not ride that unfamiliar creature, a horse, or see the citizens in military order (not his province), or take an oath (involving an imprecation against himself). He might not wear a closed ring or knots in his clothes, which might bind magic to his person; if a bound person entered his house the bonds must be removed and flung out through the roof. His hair and nails must be cut with bronze (not newfangled iron) by a free man, and the clippings, which might otherwise suffer evil magic, be buried under a fruitful tree. He might not do or see secular work, and there were objects he might not touch or name. He might not bare his head to the awesome holiness of the sky. He must of course not approach a dead body.

The augurs were three in number in early days, though they grew to be sixteen. Their responsibility was the important task of observing omens, and this was a major part of Roman public ritual. This was not foretelling the future - Cicero, himself an augur, made that clear - it was discerning the favour or disfavour of the gods. Originally the signs were probably given by birds (‘auspices’ are the observations of birds) but other natural phenomena were used, as was the Etruscan practice of examining the inward parts of sacrificial animals.

The Vestal Virgins were enrolled young and served for thirty years. They had to tend the fire on the holy hearth, make the sacred salt, and participate in various state rituals. During their period of service they had to remain strictly chaste; the penalty for unchastity was burial alive.

One college, which grew from two to ten and then fifteen, was in charge of special rites, especially the Sibylline Books. These were prophetic utterances mysteriously acquired, and consulted in times of national crisis, famine or plague or military disaster. They were much in evidence during the war with Hannibal.

Other groups were called *sodales* or associates. The most important were the fetials, twenty priests who worked in pairs and were charged with international relations, with ancient and carefully prescribed rituals for making treaties or declaring war. Some of these groups were of great antiquity, the Salii or Leaping Priests of Mars, the Arval Brethren who blessed the fields, the mysterious Sodales Titii, whose concern was fertility.

A religion of observances depends on those who will maintain the observances.

The formation of the later pantheon

As the Romans came into contact with other peoples round about, they brought their divinities into their own cult; Juno Regina was brought from Veii. Another was Diana, a spirit of the wildwood from the Alban Hills, whose priest was called the King of the Grove, and who killed his predecessor and was killed in his turn. Another was Fortuna, an oracular goddess from Antium and Praeneste, and a power of fertility, derived from a root meaning 'to bear', who eventually became Fortune. The Romans thus showed from the beginning their extraordinary capacity for adaptability.

Southern Italy, as far as the bay of Naples, had been a region of Greek colonization, and from an early date there was a powerful cultural influence from the south. The epigram that 'Captive Greece took captive her fierce conqueror' was culturally true. The Romans adopted the Greek pantheon, sometimes forcing their own divine powers into a strange mould. Jupiter was easy; he and Zeus were one in origin. Juno became his consort, the Greek Hera. For Poseidon, god of the sea, the Romans elevated the fresh-water spirit, Neptunus. Demeter found a ready equivalent in Ceres. Apollo remained himself; he was well-known to the Etruscans. His greatest glory was to lie in his relation to Augustus. The crowning victory of Actium had been won under his auspices, and he was the appropriate god of a new age of peace. Artemis, also a power of the wildwood, found her counterpart in Diana. Ares became Mars. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was identified with the garden-spirit Venus. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, a traveller and trader, was equated with Mercurius, a power of merchantry. Athene became Minerva; they were one in their patronage of crafts, but Minerva had to join the military. Hephaestus, the power of fire on the oilfields of Lemnos and Asia, merged into the volcano-*numen* Vulcanus. Vesta was in origin one with Hestia. It will be amply clear that almost all the myths that were told of these deities were taken over lock, stock and barrel from the Greeks.

Others pressed forward, less obviously. Hercules, the Greek Heracles, a demigod in Greece, perhaps even a historical figure, was to the Romans a powerful god of practical success. It is significant that his shrine was in the cattle-market. Castor and Pollux, the Heavenly Twins, were also admitted within the city boundaries, though it was Castor, the horseman, who predominated. They had, unusually, their own Roman myth; they had helped in the Roman victory at Lake Regillus in 499 BC. Dionysus, god of wine and inspiration and nature in the raw, was made one with a power of

growth, Liber, whose feminine form Libera was used for the corn-spirit Persephone, whom the Romans mispronounced Proserpina. But Bacchus and Proserpina remained as names in their own right. The healing god Asclepius, whom the Romans mispronounced Aesculapius, was consciously introduced through the Sibylline Books at a time of plague, with his sacred snake, and settled on the Tiber island where his hospital was later taken over by St Bartholomew.

Meantime the old Roman and Italian gods retained something of their power: witness the woodland spirits of Faunus and Silvanus. Faunus was identified with Pan, god of the pastureland, but he remained recognizably Italian. Silvanus never was taken over by the Greeks, but the Romans carried him (with Faunus) as far as Britain.

The calendar

Fragmentary inscriptions enable us to reconstruct the calendar of the main festivals of the Roman year. Each month had three fixed points. The Kalends, the first day, was sacred to Juno; the Ides, in mid-month, to Jupiter. The Nones which fell in between was the day on which the festivals for the month were announced. Throughout the calendar there are standard markings. The most important of these are: F, 42 *dies fasti*, on which civil action was lawful; NF, 48 *dies nefasti*, days on which legal transactions and political assemblies were religiously forbidden; C, 195 *dies comitiales*, days propitious for political assembly. One day, 15 June, is marked Q St DF (*quando stercus delatum fas*); this was the spring-cleaning day for Vesta's Temple, and it was legitimate for business only when the rubbish had been disposed of. Most festivals, except one or two commemorating historical events, fell on odd dates: 'the god loves odd numbers'. The year originally began in March, as the names September to December ('seventh' to 'tenth') remind us, but the switch to a twelve-month year beginning in January must have been early.

March was sacred to Mars, god of war and agriculture, and festivals involving purification of shields and trumpets may have had a twofold function. April was the month of opening. The festivals were mainly agricultural: the Fordicidia involved offerings of pregnant cattle, the Cerealia honoured Ceres of the growing grain, the Parilia was a shepherds' festival, the Vinalia offered the newly broached wine to Jupiter, the Robigalia propitiated Robigus, the power of disease in wheat. May is a

month of uncertain meaning, including the Lemuria or Festival of the Dead. June is also of uncertain meaning, with festivals of Vesta, and of an ancient goddess of women, Mater Matuta. July was a period of dangerous heat with miscellaneous and obscure festivals. August was mainly concerned with the corn-harvest and its joyous celebration. September was a period of rest after the intensive August festivals. The gap was filled with a two-week-long Festival of Rome. October saw the vintage and the end of the campaigning system, closing the process begun in March. November was a month of ploughing and sowing with no time for festivals. By contrast December was packed with them - the Agonia of uncertain meaning, which recurs through the year; the Consualia, in honour of Consus, spirit of the harvest-store, perhaps for store-checking; the great Saturnalia, a time of fun and games and presents, which influenced the Christian Christmas; the Opalia in honour of Ops, the power of plenty; the obscure Divalia, something to do with the winter solstice; the Larentalia, perhaps for the ancestors. January, though still a time of winter leisure, did not compete with these. There was another Agonia, and the Carmentalia, in honour of spirits of prophecy and child-birth. February was a month of purification, with six festivals, including the Lupercalia in which two young priests, smeared with blood and wearing the skins of sacrificed goats, went round striking the women with strips of skin for fertility and purification.

There were thus about forty-five major festivals, but some, like the Saturnalia, lasted a week. There were also several minor festivals, and the Ludi, Games or Contests, extended through several weeks of the year. The Romans had no 'week-ends'; their year was structured round holidays which were holy days.

It is interesting to make comparison with a military calendar from the third century AD from Dura-Europos. Two-thirds of the observances honour the divinities of the Royal House, and only Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Minerva and Neptune were left of the old gods.

The religious monuments of Rome and the Augustan reformation

The Capitoline Hill was the inner stronghold and cult-centre of Rome. The great temple, of which nothing remains but foundations, was dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus who shared it with his guests, Juno and Minerva. But there was an even older foundation nearby, to Jupiter Feretrius; the

meaning of the cult-title is uncertain, but the temple housed a sacred flint which was used in striking treaties. There was also a lost temple to Juno Moneta, dedicated in 344 BC, which housed and gave its name to the Mint.

Just below, in the Forum, stood the Temple of Saturn (pl. 30.2), perhaps dedicated in 497 BC, and restored by L. Munatius Plancus in 47 BC. It housed the Treasury. But the Forum was full of sacred monuments. The black volcanic stone, called the Lapis Niger, carries the oldest known Latin inscription (CIL VI, 36840), hedged round with tabus, commanding detours round it, perhaps sacred to the underworld gods. The Regia was the headquarters of the *pontifex maximus*, containing the sacred shields and spear of Mars, and an altar on which the blood of a horse sacrificed in the Campus Martius was sprinkled. The Temple of Vesta, round like a hearth and always rebuilt to the original plan, the sacred grove, and the Halls of the Vestals, formed a complex of great antiquity and high holiness. The Spring of Juturna (Helper or Immortal?) was naturally sacred from early times. The Temple of Castor (with Pollux) commemorated the victory at Lake Regillus, and was said to have been dedicated on 15 July 484 BC, being rebuilt in 117 BC and again under Augustus.

Alongside the Forum runs the Palatine Hill, another area replete with sanctity. Here was the cave-shrine of the Lupercal associated with the legend of the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, and with the purificatory ceremony of the Lupercalia. Here was the Hut of Romulus, preserved as a shrine. Here was a sacred fig-tree. Here also was founded the Temple of the Great Mother, when she was introduced in 204 BC.

It is impossible to mention all the surviving or known monuments even of republican Rome: for example in the Largo Argentina four temples may be seen. Their dedication is unknown, but they go back to the fourth and third centuries BC. Again, the church of S. Nicola in Carcere contains traces of three temples of the third and second centuries BC. Not far away are two exquisite monuments of the late Republic, one round and one rectangular, recently identified as dedicated to Hercules Victor and Portunus, the former built of marble from Athens.

It was the proud boast of Augustus to have found Rome brick and left it marble. In his *Res Gestae* he boasts how in 28 BC he undertook the restoration of eighty-two temples. His greatest foundation was the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, glorifying the new age of peace and culture. When he celebrated in 17 BC the *Ludi Saeculares* or Festival of the Century, with purificatory ritual and invocation of the gods of the past and gods of the future, and a general sense of rebirth and destiny, Horace's carefully scripted hymn was sung twice, before the Temples of Jupiter

Capitolinus and Apollo Palatinus. Other important foundations were to the Divine Julius (a dedication pregnant with much ruler-worship and many temples to come), to Mars the Avenger, and to Concord; the great Altar of Peace, with its sculpture portraying the ancient traditions of Rome records the part played by the imperial family in honouring them, not to forget the Mausoleum for himself and his family. He encouraged others in building too. Agrippa built the first Pantheon (pl. 13.10); Domitian was to rebuild it, and Hadrian again.

There were plenty of new foundations and restorations under the Empire, but Hadrian's Pantheon is in some ways the climax to the religious buildings of pagan Rome. Dio Cassius said, rightly, that with its circular shape it resembled the vault of heaven, or, as Shelley put it, 'it is, as it were, the visible image of the universe'.

Intellectual beliefs

The beliefs which underlay religious practices might sit lightly on some of the upper classes. The Greek historian Polybius praised the Romans for imposing religiosity on the commons to keep them under control; to him religious attitudes were a matter of political expediency. Q. Mucius Scaevola, consul in 95 BC and *pontifex maximus*, expounded a view that gods are of three kinds: the gods of the poets are disgraceful rubbish, those of the philosophers are unsuited to politics, those of statesmen are politically expedient. Cicero, an avowed sceptic about augury, was augur, and Julius Caesar, an unbeliever, *pontifex maximus*.

The leading philosophical schools of the late Republic and early Empire were the Epicurean and Stoic. Epicurus was an Athenian living about 300 BC. He believed that gods exist, in immortal bliss, but care nothing for mankind and neither reward nor punish, though emanations from them may reach those who are attuned to right and truth. The soul is mortal. There is nothing to fear in god; there is nothing to feel in death; good can be readily attained; evil can be readily endured - such is the prescription of salvation. The coming of Epicureans to Rome in 173 BC caused a scandal, and they were banished. But before long the doctrines returned and spread, and were prominent at the end of the Republic, and for three centuries after. The great monuments to the school are Lucretius' astonishing poem *On the Nature of the Universe*, and a huge account of the doctrine put round the city-centre at Oenoanda in Asia Minor by a man named Diogenes for all to

see, citizens and 'foreigners', present and to come.

Official Roman policy on the whole favoured the Stoics, though some of the sect ran foul of the first-century emperors. In the second century BC Panaetius had won Scipio Aemilianus to his faith; the first century BC saw the towering magisterial genius of Posidonius. Augustus supported a Stoic court-philosopher. Seneca, effectively regent at the outset of Nero's reign, was a Stoic. With Marcus Aurelius a Stoic reached the throne, though a wistful, half-agnostic Stoic. The Stoics were pantheists. Seneca said that Jupiter is 'governor and protector of the universe, the mind and spirit of the world, the lord and creator of this fabric'. Every name is his - Fate, Providence, Nature, Universe. The Stoics were determinists. We are actors in the divine drama. Our part is determined - but not the spirit in which we play it. Here our will has scope - and the Stoics counselled a spirit of acceptance. The most attractive Stoic of the Roman period was the Greek teacher and ex-slave Epictetus, who called his hearers to a life of praise.

The Stoics, Panaetius and Posidonius especially, had already blended some of Plato's mysticism in with their Stoicism. The Academic or Platonic school had, somewhat oddly, moved into an era of intellectual scepticism, replacing certainty of truth by probability, and in the mid-second century BC their leading spokesman, Carneades, had shocked Rome as much as did the Epicureans. Cicero, who did more than anyone to make the Romans articulate in Greek philosophy, was himself an Academic, much influenced by the Stoics, and wrote a major treatise examining different views, *On the Nature of the Gods*.

But Plato remained powerful in the Greek world under the Empire. Middle Platonists are spoken of loosely - Maximus of Tyre, an unoriginal thinker who lectured in Rome, with a high vision of God, or Numenius who presented Plato with a dose of Pythagoras, and believed in three gods (roughly an undiminished principle of being, a divine artificer, and a world soul), or Albinus. Christian thinkers, Justin, Clement and Origen, owed a debt to Plato. Then came those loosely called the Neo-Platonists, the rare religious and intellectual genius of Plotinus, who called the ultimate the One, and spoke of the soul's ascent to God as 'the flight of the alone to the Alone'.

The gods from the east

The first impact of Greek religion on Rome came from contact with the

Greek communities of Italy. But it has already been seen how the healing god Asclepius-Aesculapius was deliberately introduced from Epidaurus through the Sibylline Books as an answer to the plague of 293 BC. Similarly towards the end of the war with Hannibal, in 204 BC the Books introduced the Great Mother of Pessinus in the form of a black betyl. The information services slipped up; the Senate were horrified at the orgiastic worship and the eunuch priests and promptly clamped down on Roman participation. Catullus' sixty-third poem, a century and a half later, is evidence of the horror and attraction the Romans experienced. From the reign of Claudius a more liberal attitude prevailed. The *taurobolium* or baptism in bull's blood (pl. 30.4), giving new life to the baptized, is recorded from Puteoli in AD 134, and gorily described by the Christian poet Prudentius two centuries later.

Dionysus-Bacchus had his orgiastic worship, and there was a famous scandal in Campania in 186 BC (Livy 29, 10–14; *ILS* 18). Roman participation was thereafter strictly controlled, and assemblies were kept to a maximum of five people. Across the centuries the cult grew again. In Pompeii the Villa of the Mysteries is a marvellous symbolic pictorial representation of initiation presided over by the god and his bride Ariadne (pl. 30.3). In the second century AD there was at Tusculum an association of nearly 500 members headed by a woman, Julia Agrippinilla. The same and the following century saw members of the upper class putting scenes of Dionysus on their sarcophagi, his birth, childhood, awakening of Ariadne, triumph; they portray the lord of life with clear hope of life beyond the grave.

Isis came from Egypt where she was perhaps in origin the land waiting to be fertilized by the flooding waters of the Nile. She became a universal goddess making universal claims, the chief representative of divine femininity in the ancient Mediterranean world. Egyptian religion is attested at Puteoli in 105 BC in the form of Serapis, a god invented to express the universal aspirations of the Ptolemies, and identified in a mystic Trinity with Zeus-Jupiter and Asclepius-Aesculapius. A fine head of Serapis was found in London in the Mithraeum. Tradition said that Isis came to Rome under Sulla. The establishment was uncertain about her, and suppressed her altars. She achieved temporary recognition in 43 BC but Augustus abhorred all things Egyptian, and it was not until Gaius that she was accorded a temple in Rome, and two centuries later that she found a place on the Capitol. Of her popular appeal there is no doubt, and the last book of Apuleius' picaresque *The Golden Ass* is moving testimony to the devotion she might inspire. Her image with her son Horus affected Christian

iconography, and her title *Stella Maris* 'Star of the Sea' was taken over by Mary.

Mithras came from Persia, a mediator who, with the Sun, fought for the great god of order and light, Ahura Mazda. He was himself the central figure in a mystery-religion much beloved of soldiers, traders and civil servants. There were seven grades of initiation associated with the seven planets; the worship involved a communion meal; there was a promise of life beyond death. But the chapels (called 'caves') were small (pl. 30.7). There was no question of Mithraism sweeping the Roman world. The religion which for a time did so was Syrian sun-worship, and in AD 274 Sol Invictus, the Unconquered Sun, was established as the supreme deity of Rome. Even with the coming of Christianity to power sun-worship did not wholly lose its grip. Constantine was something of a syncretist between the two cults; Christ was portrayed under St Peter's in the sun-god's chariot, and took over his birthday of 25 December (pl. 30.8).



30.1 A sacrificial procession of a bull, sheep and pig, offered to Mars, a god of agriculture as well as war



30.2 The temple of Saturn, Rome; the existing podium was rebuilt in 42 BC, although the temple was traditionally founded in 498 BC



30.3 The Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii. The frescoes depict a sequence of events from the Dionysiac mysteries



30.4 A vessel from Boscoreale depicting the sacrifice of a bull in front of an altar



30.5 Bronze statuette of a *lar*



30.6 Stucco relief of a sacro-idyllic landscape from the Farnesina House, Rome



30.7 The Mithraeum under the church of St Clemente, Rome



30.8 An early fourth-century mosaic under St Peter's, Rome, portraying Christ sweeping across the heavens in a sun-god's chariot

· RULER · WORSHIP ·

John Ferguson

Sacral kingship

The Romans in early days knew all about sacral kingship. The King was a mediator between the divine and life on earth. Servius Tullius traced his descent to Vulcanus, or else the Lar Familiaris. The *rex sacrorum* remained as a ritual priesthood despite the suspicion attaching to the word *rex*. The same office existed in a number of Latin cities. Tradition recalled *reges augures*. The Regia remained as a sacred building, containing shrines to Mars and Ops, and the site for ceremonies associated with the ritual of the October Horse and the worship of Janus. Something of the sacrosanctity attaching to the royal mediator was transferred to the magistrates of the Republic, to the two consuls (by whatever name they were known at first), and to the tribunes.

Sacral kingship, however, is not a precise or immediate model for the later imperial worship, for the very thought of the ancient kings was anathema, and to be a priest and mediator was not the same as to be a divinity.

Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar traced his descent back to Aeneas, one of the divine founders of Rome, himself the son of Venus. When Aeneas died, according to tradition he became Iuppiter Indiges, Jupiter the Ancestor, and his son Ascanius or Iulus built him a temple and initiated a cult. Stefan Weinstock

in his remarkable study *Divus Julius* has further argued that *the gens Iulia*, finding their ancestor in Iulus, identified him with Vediovis, the young Jupiter. In one way or another Caesar could claim divine descent.

His birth was reputedly marked by a miraculous sign. The important fact about this story is that, though it cannot be traced before the Civil War, it was certainly in circulation before his death. It is part of the hagiography of a live man.

He was designated *flamen Dialis* by Marius when he was only 13; this office was incompatible with a political career, and he was saved from it by Sulla. He was himself something of a sceptic, tinged with Epicureanism, but he knew the political value of the other priesthoods. He became *pontifex* in 73 and *pontifex maximus* in 63; this title was never omitted from inscriptions in his honour except where he was designated a god.

The issue of Caesar's divinity was first raised after his defeat of Pompey. In 48 statues were decreed to him. In the east these were erected in public places, sometimes accompanied, it seems, by a goddess, Victoria or Roma, with inscriptions designating him a god. In Rome a statue was erected on the Capitol after the battle of Thapsus. The evidence from Dio is difficult and conflicting. Dio says that the inscription contained *ἡμίθεος* which Caesar caused to be deleted. But what was the word? *Hemitheus* is late Latin only; *semideus* was coined by Ovid; *heros* would have been kept by Dio. *Deo Caesari*, *Divo Iulio* and *Genio Caesaris* are possible but not certain. By the next year he was *Deo Invicto* even in Rome. About this time some of the ancient divinities become closely personalized to him, Victoria Caesaris, Fortuna Caesaris, Felicitas Caesaris.

These and other honours were awarded to him as victor and to emphasize his superiority to Pompey. After the battle of Munda in 45 he received fresh honours as Liberator, Saviour and City Founder. Liberator was a new title, neither human nor divine. Weinstock, however, has argued that the naming of a month and a tribe after him was conceived in 45 in association with this title. In connection with the title of Saviour, *Salus Caesaris* and *Clementia Caesaris* now become explicit. As to his position as Founder his statue was now set up in the Temple of Quirinus-Romulus with the inscription *Deo Invicto*. A further title at this time was *parens patriae*, and in this connection there seems to have been a public cult of Genius Caesaris.

By early 44 fresh honours were decreed: his head on coins; a pediment on his house (a feature of the temples of the gods, and the theatrical palaces of the kings); an empty throne in the theatre. Finally there were temples and altars and a priesthood in his honour, with the title (according to Dio)

of Iuppiter Iulius and with Antony as his priest.

Not everyone will accept Weinstock's reliance on the late authority of Dio, or his deductions about early observances. What we must accept on the evidence is that there was in his lifetime a movement towards the divine honours he undoubtedly received after his murder.

Appian's account of Antony's funeral speech tells that he chanted a hymn declaring Caesar a god. The people spontaneously took up the bier with the aim of cremating Caesar and setting the ashes in the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter. This did not happen, but there arose an improvised cult where the pyre stood. The great comet further helped the belief that a new god had appeared. The consecration of the new god took place in the senate on 1 January 42 (*status dei cuiusque in senatus aestimatione pendebat* - Tert. *Apol.* 13,30), being confirmed by the people (*ILS* 72). The name Divus Iulius had been in use since 44. The people were not always consulted later, but in general the precedent was followed: the Senate decreed the deification, acclaimed the new god, and pronounced the organization of the cult.

The struggle for power

In the jockeying for political power in the decade that followed religion played its part. Octavian was Caesar's adopted son - Antony remarked bitterly that he owed everything to his name - and with this inheritance, at least after the pact of Brundisium, he began to call himself *Divi filius*. Suetonius tells us of a banquet of the gods in which he took the role of Apollo. The story is dubious: whom did he allow to play Jupiter? But, Octavian certainly had Apollo as his peculiar protector long before Actium, and the god's symbols appear on his coins. It was perhaps now that he allowed the story to get about that Apollo was his father, having come to Atia in the form of a snake. There were plenty to see in Vergil's *tuus iam regnat Apollo* a reference to Octavian himself.

Sextus Pompeius, remembering how his father cleared the sea of pirates, and realizing that his own hopes depended on sea-power, proclaimed himself Neptune's son, wore a sea-blue cloak, put Neptune on his coins, and offered extravagant sacrifices to Neptune; Horace called him *Neptunius dux*. The very image of Neptune in a procession led the people of Rome to demonstrate in favour of Sextus.

Antony was the first of them to receive divine honours, but he was of

course operating in the east. He was greeted as Dionysus incarnate. Plutarch describes his arrival at Ephesus:

‘Women attired like Maenads, and men and boys like Satyrs and Pans, went in front of him clearing the way. The city was full of ivy, thyrsus wands, harps, pipes and flutes. The people greeted him as Dionysus, Beneficent Giver of Joy.’

This identification did not depend on Cleopatra. When he was in Athens with Octavia he banqueted in a Bacchic cave in the theatre of Dionysus. The Athenians set up inscriptions to him as the new Dionysus, renamed the Panathenaea the Antonaea, and gave him Athene to wife with a dowry of 1,000 talents. When he returned to Cleopatra this religious dimension was intensified. Their twins were already Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, harbingers of a new age. Cleopatra herself was the new Isis, Antony Dionysus-Osiris. Their portraits were painted as such; the Athenians set up statues to them as such. But in the end Dionysus abandoned his human incarnation.

Augustus

Octavian was faced with dangerous precedents. Deification was associated with the oriental divine kingship which the Romans feared and repudiated. Yet in some sense deification was a necessity of power.

In Egypt for practical purposes he had to be the divine king, the inheritor of the divine titles of the Ptolemies and, before them, of the Pharaohs. His statue was arguably in all the temples. To the Egyptian Greeks he was identified with Zeus Eleutherios; his name was invoked in oaths; he received the temple Cleopatra had prepared for Antony, and other temples too.

Elsewhere he was more cautious. The Greek states of the east tended to be fulsome in flattery. They had established societies (*koina*) for a variety of purposes, and these proved adaptable to ruler-cult. The initiative came in 29 BC in Asia and Bithynia. There were precedents in the honours accorded to proconsuls. But he was canny; he would not let Roman citizens worship him as a god on earth. In general he did not encourage the dedication of altars or temples to himself alone; his name must be coupled with Roma, or the Lares, or, as in Cilicia, with Poseidon. About 27 BC at Mytilene a decree conferring privileges on him left room for future

additions; the whole object was 'that he may be deified as much as possible'.

At Rome and among Romans his chief title was *Divi filius*; here the example of Hercules might give hope of future deification. The Roman establishment went beyond his own overt wishes. The Senate made his birthday a public holiday, and named a tribe after him, following the precedent established by Julius. The inclusion of his name among the gods honoured in hymn by the Salii was going further; whatever his public policy he was privately pleased, as he recorded years later in his *Res Gestae*. They also, even before his return, decreed that a libation should be poured to his Genius at every dinner, public or private, setting him among the founding fathers. Vergil in an earlier poem called him *deus*, but that was hardly more than an Epicurean echo of Lucretius. Now, in a semi-official poem with which he greeted the ruler's return, he did not call him a god, but indicated that he was marking out his road to Olympus, and dared to suggest that deity did not need to wait for death. Horace, slightly oddly, identified him with Mercury incarnate, though the identification is found also in an inscription from Cos.

The ruler himself was circumspect. He demonstrated his piety with a temple to the Divus Iulius who was the foundation of his own religious position. He restored the broken-down shrines, later boasting that there were eighty-two of them. He saw that honour was paid to Victory and Peace. He dedicated the new Temple of Apollo on the Palatine to vie with the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. His act in having his own statues melted down to enrich the new temple is ambiguous because it in some sense identified him with Apollo. Further he actually permitted one of the statues of Apollo in the temple surrounds to bear his likeness. Still, he had no place in the temple cult. When his political sagacity led him to a nominal restoration of the Republic the speech which Dio recorded linked his act with Caesar's renunciation of the crown. Were he to be killed like Caesar, he would like Caesar attain divinity. He was not immortal, but looked forward to divinity as a reward for service.

Three days later by a stroke of genius he took the title Augustus. At first he wished to take the name Romulus, which was actually proposed, declaring him unequivocally the second founder of Rome. But it was too blatant. 'Augustus' had all the religious overtones; Rome, said Ennius, had been founded *augusto augurio*; it had the associations of *augurium*, *augere* and *auctoritas*. Livy explained the word as 'superhuman'. Now a month was named after him, and a golden shield honoured him in association with Virtus, Clementia, Iustitia, Pietas. Horace at times called him a present

divinity. More generally Horace and Vergil used the parallel of Hercules, and Livy stressed the parallel. Augustus would not let Agrippa consecrate the Pantheon to his present divinity. The expectation of apotheosis is seen in the appearance of the eagle on coins: no more. The climax of this period was the inauguration of a new age in the *Ludi Saeculares* of 17 BC.

The pressures mounted. From 12 BC, when he became *pontifex maximus*, the emperor's Genius was the object of a formal state-cult and formally recognized in oaths between Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the Di Penates. The Lares Augusti also were publicly recognized. Concordia Augusta, Pax Augusta, Salus Augusta, Fortuna Augusta were honoured in the west. It was in 12 BC that Drusus at Lyon (Lugdunum) dedicated an altar to Roma and Augustus built by sixty tribes from the three Gauls; the cult was administered by an annual gathering of delegates. There was a similar altar, of uncertain date, at Cologne (Oppidum Ubiorum). At Narbo in AD 11 an altar was dedicated to Numen Augusti, perhaps a variant on Genius Augusti, but a significant one. In the east enthusiasm could hardly be controlled. Augustus was called Zeus Eleutherios in a number of inscriptions from varying sites between AD 1 and 3. At Mytilene at the same time there was a priest of Roma and Sebastos Zeus Caesar Olympios: Sebastos is the Greek for Augustus. Li via and Julia were called goddesses. A dedication to the *Theoi Sebastoi* presumably included Livia with Augustus. Julia was called the new Aphrodite or identified with Venus Genetrix. At Puteoli in AD 14 some sailors from Alexandria made a spontaneous act of veneration.

The expectation was fulfilled. After his death, on 17 September 14 the Senate decreed that the Divine Augustus be accepted among the gods of the State. In other words, Augustus was not among the *di Manes* in the underworld, but among the *di superi* above; a senator claimed to have seen him bodily ascending, and an eagle was released from the pyre. The structure of heaven reflected the structure on earth; there was imagined a kind of celestial super-senate with co-option on the basis of merit. Hercules labouring for mankind was the model, and Tiberius drew the parallel at Augustus' funeral. A rescript based the emperor's divinity on 'the magnitude of his benefactions to the whole world'. Tiberius authorized a temple to Divus Augustus in Tarracoenensis in AD 23, and thereafter the cult spread widely.

The Julio-Claudians

Augustus had a flair for success, and he set a workable pattern which only megalomaniacs departed from. Tiberius, who was in the obvious senses a far abler person but who notoriously lacked his touch, tended to follow his example. He accepted sacrifices and oaths to his Genius, but rebuked a courtier who called his duties sacred, preferring 'laborious' (as Hercules). He told the people of Gythium that divine honours should be confined to his father; he was content with human rewards. Of necessity he was, like Augustus more flexible in the east than in the west, but he adhered to precedent. He allowed the people of Asia to dedicate a temple to him, Livia and the Sacred Senate, taking as model the Temple to Augustus and Roma at Pergamum. But he would not accept a temple in Spain. Tacitus places a speech of some nobility into his mouth:

‘Conscript fathers, I call you to witness and I desire future generations to recollect that I am a mere mortal, fulfilling the duties of a man, satisfied if my actions are worthy of my high calling. Men will give my memory enough - more than enough – if they account me worthy of my ancestors, with a providential care for your interests, unflinching in danger, undeterred by enemies I encounter in my service of the State.’

Germanicus in Alexandria in AD 19 deprecated anything tending to deify himself; it was his father who was saviour and benefactor. At most he experienced the reflection of the divinities of Tiberius and Livia. But that was Egypt (pl. 31.1). Some of the official propaganda of the reign emphasizes qualities with divine overtones - *providentia*, for instance, and *liberalitas*. There can be little doubt that Tiberius lived in the expectation of a deification after death which he did not in fact receive.

With Gaius we come on the first of the megalomaniacs. The day of his accession was called the Parilia and treated as a second founding of Rome. In 38 he had his dead sister Drusilla consecrated and granted a priesthood. A senator declared that he had witnessed her ascension and she was given the name Panthea. Livilla was honoured at Pergamum. He himself appeared in various divine guises, as Dionysus, Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Neptune, Juno, Diana, Venus and one of the Dioscuri. He made the Temple of the Dioscuri a vestibule to his palace. He invited the Moon to share his bed. He was greeted as Jupiter Latiaris; he ordered his head to be placed on the statue of Zeus at Olympia; he scandalized the Jews by ordering a statue of Zeus with his own head to be placed in the temple at Jerusalem. At Rome he instituted one or even two temples to his own godhead. At Miletus an association of Lovers of Augustus consecrated a temple to him.

The admirable Claudius redressed the balance. Only in Britain did he accept a temple in his honour. This, as Lily Ross Taylor remarked, was simply a means of insuring the loyalty of a region which had no relations with the earlier *divi*. Elsewhere in the west it was his Genius which received honour. Claudius actually deprecated the offering of divine honours in Alexandria, though the governor in publishing the refusal called him 'Caesar our god'. His consecration of Livia in 41 was in accord with precedent, and an altar to Pietas Augusta no doubt acknowledged this. Seneca called him a Saviour and spoke of his *divinae manus*. However much the Senate might resent the authority of upstart freedmen controlling the civil service, however tragic his private life might be, there was appreciation of his wise care of the State, and he duly received deification after death, though Seneca is said to have jested at his 'pumpkinification' and a satire (perhaps by Petronius?) survives on the apotheosis. It parodies the official procedure with the witness to his ascension and the debate in the Senate. A temple to him was begun; there were *flamen* and *flaminica* and Sodales Augustales Claudiales.

With Nero megalomania returned, and as early as 54 the Senate voted a large statue in the temple of Mars Ultor. But his own ambitions were slow to develop, and as late as 65 he vetoed a proposal for a temple to Divus Nero; it was ill-omened as anticipating his death. His consecration of Poppaea and their dead child did not go beyond precedent. His naming of April Neroneus however showed the trend in his mind. In Egypt the month Pharmuthi became Neroneios Sebastos. Caesarea Philippi was renamed Neronias, Artaxata Neronei, and there seems little doubt that he intended to rename the Peloponnesus as the Neronesus, and even Rome Neropolis. On coins of Asia Minor he was called 'god', and at Sicyon identified with Zeus. More frequent was the identification with Hercules, as on coins of Patrae, or Apollo, as in an inscription from Athens. He was greeted on his return to Rome in both identities. Above all there was his identification with the Sun-god in inscriptions from Acraephiae and Sagalassus, in his representation on coins with the Sun's radiate crown, in his depiction on theatre-hangings driving the Sun's chariot through the sky, and in a colossal statue of the god with his own features.

The Flavians

After the traumas of the assassination of Nero and the Year of the Four

Emperors, the Empire settled back into sanity with the accession of the blunt soldier Vespasian. But he was a usurper, and had to establish his claims in which the capture of Jerusalem was a part. Dedications to Pax Augusta or Vespasian's Victory are known, and coin-types also deal in semi-divine abstractions. He gave short shrift to flattery of his own person. He was a man among men, a servant among servants; that he personally helped to shift the rubble from the Capitol was typical of his attitude. Yet he knew he had served well, and his words as he felt the approach of death 'Vae! puto deus fio!' ('Oh dear! I think I'm becoming a god!') were only half in jest. Vespasian saw in his reign the centenary and the reenactment of Augustus, and it was appropriate that he succeeded Augustus and Claudius, whose temple he completed, among the divinized emperors.

Vespasian, against the views of Stoics and traditional Romans, had insisted on dynastic succession. Rome feared his son and successor Titus for his ruthlessness, and his fondness for oriental splendour. He belied their fears. He was proud of being a Benefactor, and if a day passed without his conferring a benefit he would cry 'Friends, I have lost a day!' His premature death was greeted with sincere and spontaneous mourning, and he, the son of a god, was also admitted to the ranks of the gods.

His brother Domitian was of a different temper. Brought up under the shadow of his father and brother, he showed the megalomania of a Gaius or Nero. Suetonius and Dio both tell that he demanded to be addressed as *dominus et deus*. There is no record of this on inscriptions, but Martial as early as 89 speaks of *edictum domini deque nostri*, and the remarks of Pliny and Dio of Prusa confirm the same thing. Some people think that the words put into the mouth of Thomas in the Christian gospel *According to John* were intended as a counterblast to Domitian's claims; Jesus, not the emperor, is the true Lord and God. Domitian's claims were dangerous; as god he belonged to a different plane from his subjects; as *dominus* he could treat them as slaves. In fact, though Domitian persecuted the senatorial class, he did not undo the government of his predecessors; only, in Charlesworth's words, 'he paraded absolutism, giving to the imperial position the airs of divinity and the pomp of a despot', and he met the assassin's knife.

The five good emperors

The period which followed the assassination of Domitian was accounted by

Gibbon the happiest in the history of mankind, though his ironical detachment noted that it was essentially unstable. Whether by deliberate policy or through the accident of childlessness the pattern grew of the adoption of the best successor by his predecessor.

The general practice with respect to deification was a return to Augustus. Trajan deified Nerva. He did not seek worship for himself, and refused it when offered. When his sister Marciana died in 112 he had her deified together with his own natural father. He was doubly *Divifilius*. Hercules was his patron deity; he instituted the *ludi Herculei* at Rome, and Hercules appears frequently on the coins. The analogy with the emperor labouring for his people could not be missed, and Dio of Prusa was one of those to draw it. The expectation of divinity was there (pl. 31.2), and it was fulfilled by Hadrian who dedicated a temple to Trajan and his wife Plotina in 125. More, his memory was long-lasting. In the fourth century they prayed for an emperor to be *felicior Augusto, melior Traiano*. The Slavic god Trojan, worshipped in early Russia, seems to be nothing more than the divinized Trajan mediated through the Dacians. Even Christian Europe had a legend of the admission of Trajan to heaven at the instigation of Gregory the Great.

Hadrian began in the same way, deliberately recalling Augustus, and in 126 refused the divine honours formally offered by the Achaean League, though divine titles were sporadically attached to him in dedications. But from the winter of 128 a new attitude appears. In consecrating the *celia* of the huge temple of Zeus Olympios at Athens he dedicated an altar to himself outside. Shortly after, a coin commemorating his visit to Ephesus proclaimed that the emperor was identified with Zeus Olympios in person. The Athenians, who dedicated 95 known altars and 47 known statues to him, did not call him Zeus and simply kept the title Olympios, but the 174 altars and 107 statue bases known from Asia frequently identify him with Zeus or, sometimes, with other gods (even the God of the Underworld), and the colossal temple at Cyzicus showed him in the guise of Zeus. He was Zeus Panhellenios calling the Greeks to their inheritance. On official coins he is sometimes portrayed with an aureole. At Antinoopolis he was entitled Saviour of the World and received the cult-names of Zeus. The new name for Jerusalem - Aelia Capitolina - pointed in the same direction. When he travelled to Miletus he was greeted as Olympios. At Patara they called him Zeus and Sabina Hera. In the Serapeum at Alexandria he installed a chapel to his own divinity. In Egypt they called him the glorious god.

This is the necessary background to the deification of his beloved Antinous, drowned in the Nile. This was not directly part of the imperial

cult; yet it was part of the same pattern as the imperial-divine will. And it caught on. Half a million pilgrims brought offerings to Antinoopolis. Coins and inscriptions proclaimed the dead boy 'Antinous the God'. He was inevitably identified with Osiris, and with Hermes, Silvanus, Pan. Over thirty Greek cities issued commemorative coins. At least 2,000 statues were produced in eight years and at least forty cities venerated him; twelve had cults and seven had festivals in his honour. And it lasted. His statue at Antinoopolis stood till 375, and, even later, medallions were issued proclaiming him a god. At Delphi the statue, thrown down in an invasion from the north, was carefully replaced. In Italy his statues were meticulously shielded from Christian iconoclasm or barbarian assault.

So Hadrian's divine status lived on, despite the opposition of the Senate. Aelius Aristides in addressing Antoninus Pius declared that the mere mention of Hadrian's name was enough for people to rise and worship him. Zeus brought order out of chaos, and Hadrian, Zeus-like, had done likewise. 'Confusion and strife came to an end, and universal order entered as a brilliant light over the private and the public affairs of men.' He received temples in the Campus Martius, and at Puteoli games, *flamines* and a Sodalitas Hadrianalis.

His successor T. Aelius Antoninus insisted on the consecration, earning for himself the titles of *Divi filius* and of Pius. He liked the shortened name Antoninus Augustus Pius, and reverted to the full spread of his names only for the dedication of the temple to his predecessor. Where Hadrian had travelled throughout his empire, Antoninus sat in Rome; like a spider in the middle of his web, said one historian. No longer was the emperor Zeus Panhellenios. The very cult of Roma was in decay in the provinces, though in Rome he dedicated a temple to Roma Aeterna and Venus Felix. There was praise of Victoria and Pax and Felicitas and Fortuna, associated with the emperor. In Alexandria he was honoured as Pantheos, Helios-Zeus-Ammon, Ruler of the Universe, a power of light after what some saw as the dark days of Hadrian. Or he might be seen as Hercules. The comparison remained potent, and he too received his heavenly reward ([pls 31.3](#) and [31.4](#)). The temple which he had dedicated to his wife Diva Faustina, in honouring her after her death, now became a temple to them both ([pl. 31.5](#)).

So we come to Marcus Aurelius, the half-agnostic philosopher-king, a figure of tragic pathos. He was no judge of men. He took his brother L. Verus as his equal colleague, but Verus was unworthy of his confidence. Verus liked titles; after his exploits in the east he styled himself first Armeniacus and then Hercules Pacifer. Marcus took the hint, and, on his death from apoplexy, had him deified; perhaps the burden of Lucius dead

and divine was lighter than the burden of Lucius alive and human. When the younger Faustina died the Senate deified her; who knows what Marcus would have done left to himself? Marcus pursued his lonely human course to the bitter end. As his death approached on a campaign far from Rome they asked him for the password. He said: 'Go to the rising sun; my sun is setting.' It was an ambiguous and half-religious answer. The rising sun was Commodus, another example of his ill-judgment of people; the epigrammatist said that the only harm he did was in being a father. His sun set, and he too passed among the gods, though to the Stoic part of himself the divine spirit was already within him, and nothing to do with his imperial status.

From Commodus to Aurelian

With Commodus we are back in the realm of megalomania. As early as 175 he had taken the *toga virilis* on the very day when Romulus had become a god. At first his actions were merely undignified and offensive to Roman tradition. Eastern cults were growing in strength at Rome; he took the gods of the east as his protectors. His Felicitas and Salus and even Hilaritas were honoured at Rome; Pietas and Libertas too. But his ambitions were expanding. Interestingly his self-identification was with Hercules ([pl. 31.6](#)), but not with Hercules labouring for mankind in the hope of further divinity, but Hercules already a god, his labours over. He was Hercules Romanus, the new founder of Rome, ruling at Jupiter's side ; Romulus was pushed out. Nero's colossus was to be turned into a statue of Commodus as Hercules. The twelve months were to be named for all time Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Herculeus Romanus Exsuperatorius Amazonius Invictus Felix Pius. He was, wrote Weber, lord of the world, of space and time, of mankind and its happiness. He fell to a palace revolution, to rise again as Divus Commodus at the hands of Septimius Severus.

For, by the time of the Severi, it was clear that the Empire had no focal point of spiritual unity except in the *divina domus*. So Severus claimed continuity with the Antonines, deified Commodus and Pertinax, and began to emphasize the divinity of the ruling emperor, and his house. The emperor was *numenpraesens*, the gods his partners, even advisers (*comités*). Emperor-worship was strong in the military camps. In an altar on the Raetian frontier the members of the imperial house are named before

the other gods; so too at Lambaesis. In the calendar of military festivals from Dura the imperial divinities from Julius onwards have ousted the Olympians except for Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mars and Neptune. A typical entry is that for 7 May: 'Tor the Birthday of the Divine Julia Maesa, an act of prayer to the Divine Julia Maesa.' On coins too Septimius and Caracalla are compared to the Sun-god, the *rector orbis*. Geta appears with the rayed crown of the Sun-god. The empress has the attributes of the Moon-goddess, Julia Domna is portrayed as Cybele with the ambiguous title *Mater Deum*, or seated on Juno's throne ; so too Julia Mamaea.

The extraordinary career of Elagabalus was thus only an exaggeration of what was already implicit. A priest of the Sun-god of Syria, whose black betyl he brought from Emesa to Rome, he was identified with his god, an identification made easier by his radiant beauty. He married a Vestal Virgin in a ritual enactment of a heavenly union. Rome could not stomach his oriental extravagances and he succumbed to a palace revolution.

It was in the second half of the century that Aurelian brought a decisive change. He abandoned the theory of *Gottkonigtum* for the Mazdean doctrine of rule by the grace of God, though, paradoxically, he was himself honoured as *dominus et deus*, as was Carus after him. To the Mazdeans and to Aurelian god was the Sun-god. For the remainder of the century the divine favour was shown sometimes by the Sun, sometimes by Jupiter or Mars or even Hercules. In the reorganization of Diocletian the senior emperor was under the protection of Jupiter, the junior under Hercules.

The way was prepared for the Christian Empire. Constantine was something of a syncretist between the Sun-god and the god of the Christians. But though he might invest his statue at Constantinople with the attributes of the Sun-god, and though the emotions appropriate to the divine monarch might still be directed to the monarch who ruled not as god but as his god's vice-gerent, Constantine's resting-place was set not among the thrones of the twelve Olympians, but among the cenotaphs of the twelve apostles.

The neocorate

The imperial cult flourished in the Asiatic provinces. A city which received authority to be a centre of the provincial cult was styled temple-warden or *neokoros*, and the neocorate was an object of some contention.

It was at Smyrna that Roma was first recognized as a goddess. By 10 BC

the assembly of the *koinon* was meeting there. Under Tiberius the cities of Asia applied to set up a temple to Tiberius, Livia and the Holy Senate. Smyrna was assigned the temple with the title *neokoros*. In the second century Smyrna was granted a temple to Hadrian and a second neocorate, and a third in the third century.

Pergamum was the first meeting-place of the assembly of the *koinon*. It had a temple of Augustus and Roma, a festival Romaea Sebasta, and the neocorate. In the second century it received a temple of Trajan and a second neocorate.

At Ephesus the representatives of Asia joined in calling Julius god manifest. There was a city cult of Augustus, and of Gaius and Lucius, and under Tiberius a priestess of Livia as Augusta Demeter, a priest of Tiberius' twin grandsons, and a dedication to Tiberius by the Roman settlers. But it was not till Claudius that the title of *neokoros* was granted. A second title was granted for a temple to Domitian, withdrawn by Trajan because of Domitian's unpopularity, and restored for the new temple of Hadrian Olympios and the festival Hadrianeia Olympia.

Tarsus was twice *neokoros*, once under Hadrian, and once under Commodus. Sardis had the neocorate for a temple of Hadrian as Dionysus with a Sacred Hadrianic Stage Guild of actors. Philadelphia, though a centre of imperial cult, did not receive the neocorate till Caracalla. Tralles received the title without a temple. At Magnesia-on-the-Maeander there were Asiarchs in Nero's reign and, later, a festival of Roma. At Laodicea the *koinon* held meetings and the emperor's names were added to the Festival of Zeus. So too with the Festival of Apollo at Thyateira, where there was a shrine to Trajan and Hadrian was honoured as Zeus Olympios. At Caesarea the temple of Augustus and Roma dominated the city, and there was a shrine to Tiberius dedicated by Pontius Pilate.

The climactic period of the neocorate was about AD 200. The possession of a temple was not enough; Nicaea never received the title. This was granted under the Julio-Claudians to Ephesus, Pergamum, Smyrna, Ancyra and probably Tarsus, in the second century to Ephesus, Pergamum, Smyrna and Tarsus again, Cyzicus and Laodicea, and under the Severi to Ephesus for the third time, Perinthus, Sardis and Mazaca Caesarea. But there were other grants at unknown dates. We know of provincial cults at Tomi, Philippopolis, Thessalonica, Nicomedia, Amasia, Neocaesarea, Nicopolis, Synnada, Tralles, Anazarbus, Perge, Side, Tripolis and Syrian Laodicea, and cults of some sort at Juliopolis, Hierapolis, Aegae, Neapolis, Teos, Acmonia, Nysa and Abila-Leucas. Besides the festivals at Pergamum and Ephesus, the Hadrianeia were celebrated at Cyzicus and Smyrna, the

Commodeia at Tarsus, and the Severeia at Perinthus, Cyzicus, Sardis, Caesarea in Cappadocia and Laodicea in Syria.

The process of apotheosis

The main symbols of apotheosis were the eagle and the wreath ([pl. 31.7](#)). We have imaginative representations of apotheosis in sculpture. A relief from Ephesus (now in Vienna) shows Trajan rising to heaven in the chariot of the Sun, leaving Earth behind. A panel in the Capitoline shows the apotheosis of the empress Sabina, in the presence of Hadrian, attended by a winged spirit representing Eternity and bearing the truth of eternal light. The Vatican Apotheosis shows Antoninus and Faustina ([pl. 31.3](#)), identified with Jupiter and Juno, swept upwards by a winged spirit with eagles on either side and the goddess Roma and god of the Campus Martius watching. A coin of 176–9 shows the younger Faustina, with a sceptre in her hand and her veil forming a nimbus, translated to heaven on the back of Juno's peacock.

Conclusion

Behind the imperial cult were three major impulses.

For the imperial subjects in the east it was an expected tradition and a spontaneous reaction. After all the Greek gods had not been morally better than men, only more powerful, and the Roman emperor exercised wider power than any human had ever possessed. It is notable that the Greek cities went beyond the measures encouraged by the more moderate rulers, and that Romans in the east were assumed to respond differently.

For the emperor it was a means, an extreme means, of attaching to himself sacrosanctity and an extra dimension of authority. For the more moderate it offered a goal and aspiration; a Tiberius, a Claudius, a Vespasian, really did strive to merit posthumous glory. But it was a dangerous weapon in the hands of those who suffered from an inferiority complex or were in other ways unbalanced.

For the Roman government the object was political. 'The emperor was god,' said Fustel de Coulanges, 'because he was emperor,' and Havet called the apotheosis 'merely one form of the adoration which Rome exacted for herself'. So, by a curious paradox, it was more readily

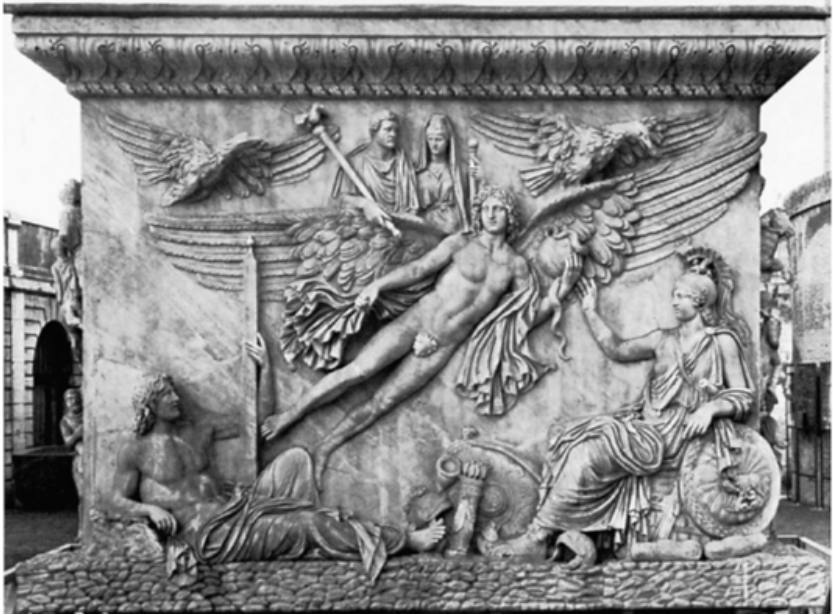
introduced in the newer or more backward provinces of the west, Britain and Germany for instance. Indeed it has been argued with some weight that Vespasian began by combining political resettlement with a provincial cult of the emperor in Narbonensis, Baetica and Africa. Jupiter-Zeus could unite the Romans and Greeks, and the Capitoline temple was prominent enough in north Africa, but he did not ultimately offer a focus of unity. Much later, Aurelian tried to find a unifying symbol in Sol Invictus, but by then it was too late. Roma, an abstraction devised by the Greeks, did not excite the provincials. But Augustus and Roma did, or rather Augustus did in association with Roma, or faintly disguised under his Genius or his *numen*. The emperor was the focus of unity for the Empire, and in a world where religion was simply a dimension permeating the whole of life, this was expressed through ruler cult.



31.1 The apotheosis of Germanicus on a cameo now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris



31.2 The apotheosis of Trajan on the Arch of Trajan, Benevento, dating to AD 115



31.3 The apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and Faustina



31.4 A *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius depicting the temple of Faustina, who died in AD 141



31.5 The apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and Faustina portrayed on an ivory diptych, and dating perhaps to some three centuries after the event



31.6 A statue of Commodus as Hercules, his favourite identity



31.7 Coin of Claudius II : *obv.* DIVO CLAUDIO ; *rev.* an eagle and CONSECRATIO

· PROVINCIAL · CULTS ·

Miranda J. Green

Introduction

Roman divinities were introduced to their provinces at the time of occupation, were adopted, absorbed and adapted to indigenous taste. Different reactions of native to Roman religious influences may be seen in different areas: in some regions Rome, at least overtly, swamped native religious culture. In others, the indigenous element clearly shows through. One sharp division may be recognized. It is only in the western, Latin-speaking areas that the Roman pantheon was adopted in any real sense. In the hellenized east, Greek divinities were firmly established and it was to them that indigenous divinities remained linked rather than to the later intrusive religion of Rome.

The Danubian and Balkan provinces

Noricum and Dalmatia possess similar evidence for patterns of belief. Official Roman deities are represented in both; both saw an upsurge in the adoption of eastern cults like those of Mithras and Dolichenus, possibly in response to a need for the comfort of personal commitment after a time of political instability in the later second century. A *Dolichenaemum* was erected at Virunum in south Noricum in AD 189; there were *Mithraea* around Arupium and Cavtat (Epidaurum) in Dalmatia in the third century. In both provinces Roman and native divinities were conflated; Minerva Flanatica may be cited, a local goddess of Flanona in Istria, Jupiter

Uxellinus and Mars Latobius, who were topographical *genii* of Noricum. Latobius had a shrine near St Margarethen in the Lavant Valley. The Celtic Belenus, identified with Apollo, was popular in Noricum; and we know of Noreia, patroness of the province (pl. 32.3), who had a shrine at Hohenstein. Some native deities did not have Roman equivalents; Sentona of Tarsatica in Dalmatia was an independent goddess.

In Pannonia native deities took shape only within the outward religious framework of Rome and, unlike the main Celtic provinces, the stimulus of Roman traditions of physical representation and epigraphy did not lead to expression of native beliefs. Even local *genii*, like Danuvius (of the Danube) were artificially created by foreigners. Roman cults abound; in the mid-second century statues to the Capitoline Triad were set up in Szombathely (Savaria) and Sopron (Scarbantia) in western Pannonia. Under army influence Mithras and Dolichenus appear in the second century, at Ptuj (Poetovio) and Carnuntum. The Egyptian pantheon was honoured in some towns. Under the prosperity of the Severan Dynasty, there was renewed religious activity; most important seems to have been the cult of Silvanus. He possibly masks a local rural god, and his popularity was as a domestic, personal fertility power, represented by dedications, not shrines, attached to private small-holdings in the Danube frontier-regions. In summary, the main characteristic of Pannonian religion was its lack of synthesis; notwithstanding underlying beliefs, everything was expressed in Roman terms. Moesia paints a similar, somewhat colourless, picture; the only really local god recorded is Andinus who appears once.

One major cult shared by the main Danubian provinces of Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia was that of the Danubian Rider-Gods. Its *floruit* was the third century; it is expressed usually by small marble or lead plaques, and its basic iconography is that of one or two riders trampling a vanquished enemy and accompanied by a goddess (pl. 32.4). A complex mythology and liturgy are implied, suggesting mysteries of initiation, death and rebirth, chthonic and cosmic forces.

Before the conquests of Thrace and Dacia and their division into separate territories, the indigenous religions of modern Romania and Bulgaria were in some respects homogeneous. Both worshipped Bendis, a Mother-Goddess, and Zalmoxis, an underworld deity, who are represented in open shrines, for example at Hunedoara (Sarmizegetusa). The Thracians were horse-lovers and, like the Dacians, expressed this in their religion. In Thrace the main god was a Rider-Hunter; he had no name and on dedications he was simply 'the Hero'. More than 3,000 pre-Roman and Roman reliefs to him survive. He represents the hunting prowess of the

horse-owning Thracian aristocracy; indeed, the hunting symbolism is so strong that Roman votive tablets here portray Apollo and Dionysus as horsemen. The Thracian Horseman should never be confused with the Danubian Riders who were a totally separate phenomenon not developed until the late second century.

In Dacia and Thrace Graeco-Roman and Oriental gods had their following. The variety present is exemplified by the Severan hoard of twenty-four sculptures from Constanta (Tomis) on the Black Sea. In Thrace, the main Graeco-Roman divinities were Dionysus, as Lord of life and vegetation, and the Healers Aesculapius and Apollo.

Asia Minor and Syria

In this culturally Greek area, Greek religion predominated. Though the main construction of the great temple to Artemis at Ephesus was hellenistic, her fame remained undiminished in Roman times, and the cult obviously masks that of a local goddess. Sardis has similar evidence for Artemis. The oracular cults of Apollo at Claros and Didyma were patronized by Roman emperors until at least the third century. Aesculapius was worshipped at Pergamum from the archaic period, but great rebuilding activities took place in the second century AD. Zeus was everywhere adopted; Tyche or Fortune was important as protectress of cities.

Certain cults are especially distinctive. At Xanthus the Sanctuary of Leto, the national deity of Lycia, may be noted; Comba was the centre of a specifically Lycian cult, that of the 'Twelve Gods', represented by a homogeneous group of reliefs. Other Anatolian religions, like those of Cybele and Sabazius, spread to the west, and there became more important than in their homeland.

Although Syria and Arabia possessed a hellenistic tradition, they had also strong indigenous cults which were adopted and conflated both with Greek and later Roman religious concepts. Sun- and sky-gods were particularly important and religion was dominated by various Baals or celestial high gods. At Baalbek, the home of the great Syrian sun-god, Baal was identified first under the Ptolemies with Helios and then with Jupiter; so he is frequently invoked as 'Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus'. The main sanctuary, begun under Augustus, occupied 2.7 ha (6.7 acres). Baal was associated here with the great Syrian fertility goddess Atargatis, to be discussed below. At Palmyra two major triads may be identified. Bel,

a sky-god linked with Jupiter, was associated with the local deities Iarhibol and Aglibol. Baal Shamin, another lord of heaven, was linked with Aglibol and Malakbel. The temples of both Bel and Baal Shamin (pl. 32.5) at Palmyra were especially splendid and most building activity took place during the first two centuries AD. Baal Shamin is depicted sometimes in Roman armour, with sky-symbols, thunderbolt and corn-ears, showing his multifunctional character as god of sky, rain, protection and fertility. At Dura Europos, where Palmyrene troops were present, a temple-fresco displays the cohort's tribune sacrificing to a Palmyrene triad of gods dressed in Roman armour; this can be dated to the earlier third century AD.

Dea Syria (Atargatis) was the patroness of the Syrians. She was essentially a fertility-deity and was associated with Baalbek's sun-god. She was worshipped in the province of Arabia, where the Nabateans called her Allat; indeed the Arabians had a strong and interesting religious tradition of their own. Two sites concern us here, Petra and Khirbet Tannur. At Petra, Allat-Atargatis was associated with the local life-giving natural springs. She was represented in anthropomorphic form associated with lions and leopards, but the Arabian Dusares was generally portrayed in the old Nabatean manner, represented by a block of stone, as in the main shrine at Petra of Kasr-el-Bint, built in late Nabatean times in the late first century BC (pl. 32.1). At Tannur, a hilltop shrine south of Petra, the visible remains are of second century AD date. Here Atargatis is depicted with fertility emblems of pomegranates and grain-stalks, in company with Dusares and a thunder-god Hadad. But here she is associated also with dolphins, perhaps linking her with Aphrodite but possibly symbolic instead of a deity who protected travellers (the dolphin being a fair-weather symbol). It is interesting that Atargatis sometimes appears not with dolphins but as a fish-goddess (possibly a fertility-motif). As such she had a sacred pool at Hierapolis, and Lucian describes her fish-connections and her cult in general.

Egypt and North Africa

In Egypt, under the Ptolemies, Egyptian religion was thoroughly hellenized. In the Greek-settled cities the main Egyptian gods received Greek names: for instance Isis = Aphrodite; Ammon = Zeus. The importance of animal-symbolism decreased; the cult of Serapis, created by Ptolemy I, from the old Osiris/Apis cults, had major sanctuaries at

Memphis and Alexandria. In the Roman period Serapis was popular primarily as a saviour-god of healing and fertility, with oracular properties. The Romans did little to alter the essence of Graeco-Egyptian religion, though official dedications, like that to Jupiter Capitolinus at Arsinoe, are known. In theory the emperors were heirs of the pharaohs and Egyptian temple-carvings depict them in the Egyptian iconographical tradition. Official patronage is indicated clearly in upper Egypt, where a series of great Nile temples, begun by the Ptolemies, were completed or embellished during the first two centuries AD. Dendera, dedicated to Hathor, was begun in the second century BC and completed in AD 60. But the great sacral complex of the Nile-island of Philae is of greatest interest for our period. Situated at the beginning of the first Cataract, it is covered with temples and monuments; the main sanctuary, dedicated to Isis and Harpocrates, is Ptolemaic in origin but the presence of Roman involvement from Tiberian times is much in evidence; Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius are all depicted in company with Isis and other native gods. Philae was still visited by devotees from the Roman Empire until the fifth century.

In Africa, Roman religion was introduced to a land with a strong indigenous tradition. Of pre-Roman deities the Punic Tanit of Carthage and Baal Hammon were the most prominent. Roman and native gods co-existed to an extent, but phenomena peculiar to Africa may be observed. The numerous urban *capitolia* may be due partly to accidents of preservation; that at Sufetula (Tunisia) is noteworthy in having separate buildings for each of the Capitoline Triad with the largest to Jupiter. But whilst the official Graeco-Roman pantheon was readily accepted by romanized Africans, there is evidence of concealment and overtly classical representations were sometimes merely a veneer for the old Phoenician gods. The bloodthirsty Tanit, who in Carthage demanded the human sacrifice of children burnt alive, survived as Caelestis, frequently identified with Juno. A Severan temple to her survives at Thugga (Tunisia), alongside a Hadrianic complex of shrines to Concordia, Frugifer and Liber. At Thuburbo Maius (Tunisia), Aesculapius was equated with Punic Eshmoun; at Gigthis, Hercules was identified with Punic Melqart. Liber, the African Shadrappa, had a Severan dedicant at Lepcis Magna with a Punic name, Boncarth.

Despite the multiplicity of their gods, to only a few of whom allusion has been made, north Africans appear to have tended towards monotheism, in which one syncretistic cult seems to predominate: that of the high god Baal, identified not with Jupiter but with the obscurer Italian Saturn, presumably because the latter's fertility function as *numen* of sowing made him the

appropriate Roman equivalent. Of the numerous sites attesting to the cult, Bou Kournein (Tunisia) is a typical Baal-Saturn sanctuary; there is no built temple but a *locus consecratus* was situated high up and yielded hundreds of inscribed and sculptured dedications. Epigraphic material dates to the mid-second and early third century; the god is portrayed bearded, with radiate crown, whip and *patera*. At Tiddis near Cirta (Algeria) Baal-Saturn was again worshipped in a high place, at the topmost point in the town. Hippo Regius (Algeria) had a shrine with three *cellae* and, as at Tiddis, the deity was invoked on numerous stones. Lambaesis produced nearly 200 Saturn-stones in the vicinity of a mid-second century shrine to Aesculapius.

Romano-African religion is ambiguous; romanization was thorough, but the popularity of Baal-Saturn indicates that it was not total. Saturn was an ancient Italian god, comparatively rare in the Empire outside Africa, and his appearance here must indicate deliberate choice by the indigenous population to worship their own wholly African deity of heaven and fertility, under the guise of a Roman god.

Spain

It is sometimes assumed that indigenous beliefs (Blázquez, 1977; 1983) were overlain by those of Rome almost to the point of obliteration (Wiseman, 1956, 99ff.). Although this seems frequently, though not always, to have happened in Lusitania and Baetica, in north-west Tarraconensis (Galicia) where the mountain tribes were not finally subjugated until the late first century BC, native cults were preserved and are in evidence epigraphically throughout the Roman period; these will be dealt with more fully below.

Deities of Roman or Oriental origin occur all over Iberia (Vazquez, 1982) especially in the romanized towns. Thus Venus Victrix is found at Merida (Emerita Augusta) in Lusitania; Victory at Santiponce (Italica) in Baetica and Minerva at Coruña (Clunia) in Tarraconensis. Mithras and Cybele were worshipped at Chaves (Aquae Flaviae) and Emerita, and a woman, Fabia Fabrana, set up a statue to Isis at Guadix in the south.

Jupiter was dominant; about a hundred dedications come from Galicia alone, where many different aspects of his cult may be observed. In the Bracara and Asturica areas official dedications appear in the state-run mining lands, with Jupiter Municipalis invoked at Aquae Flaviae. But, at a personal level, Spaniards equated the Roman sky-god with their own high

mountain gods, like Jupiter Candeidus ('brilliant') worshipped by an Asturian. Mars was conflated with local protectors of rural territory. In Spain, unlike Gaul, Mercury was not readily adapted to native cults. In the north-west, the Roman tutelary *numina* were popular, and *lares* are found with local names attached, for example Lar Sefius at Braga (Bracara); it is as if Roman divine protectors of the home were considered suitable for adaptation to local, domestic worship.

In Galicia, where recent detailed studies have been made, the most interesting results lie in the discovery of numerous gods with local, native names, not linked with Roman gods and pre-dating the occupation. Of these some were popular and presided over several localities; others appear only once or twice and were tied, like many Celtic gods of Gaul and Britain, to specific places. The Celtic origin of the devotees may be inferred from many of the names. Thus, the Suleae Nantugiatae ('nantu' is Celtic, referring to water) at Condado were invoked by a local, Flavinus; the Suleviae were Celtic mother-goddesses known in Britain and Gaul and associated, at Bath, with a therapeutic spring sanctuary. Bormanicus, at Caldas de Vizela, was also a spring-deity, turning up as Bormanus and Bormana in Gaul. The importance of water-gods in the mountains of northern Spain is likewise indicated by the presence of *genii loci* occurring perhaps no more than once under a given name. Tameobrigus was honoured at the confluence of the rivers Douro and Tâmega.

Evidence for the dominance of several native divinities is provided by multiple dedications in given regions within Tarraconensis. Around Bracara Augusta, Bandua, Nabia and Laraucus were popular local powers. Laraucus had a small shrine at the foot of a high mountain near the modern village of Perdizes; two altars, dedicated to Laraucus and Jupiter respectively, suggest identification of a local mountain god with the Roman sky-father. Native cults, like that of the Lusitanian underworld god Endovellicus, are sometimes found outside the north-west.

In Spain, as one might expect, it is in the remote areas that native deities are dominant (Blázquez, 1983), on mountains, on the sites of rivers and springs, in small shrines or worshipped at home, and this is echoed in Gaul and Britain. While towns and mining regions received the full impact of Roman religion, in some country districts only the presence of epigraphy and the use of Roman lettering betray the existence of intrusive influence.

Gaul, Britain and Germany

Here Roman religious traditions were superimposed on peoples whose cults, like those of Spain, were largely aniconic and anonymous. There is evidence of Classical and Oriental cults entirely free from Celticism. Several Provençal towns, like Nîmes and Arles, knew Cybele and Isis; Serapis was worshipped in the Lower Rhône Valley; Mithras and Dolichenus occur at Tournes and Marseille respectively (Clébert, 1979, 256–62). Further north, Cybele was established in Lyon by AD 160. Mithraism was important in the Rhineland, Koenigshoffen being just one of the known *Mithraea*. In Britain, London was the main centre for eastern cults in the south; Mithras was the most prominent, but Serapis, Isis and Cybele all had followers (Harris and Harris, 1965; Green, 1983, 17ff.). The frontier-zone of Hadrian's Wall too has rich evidence for Mithras, with Dolichenus also attested.

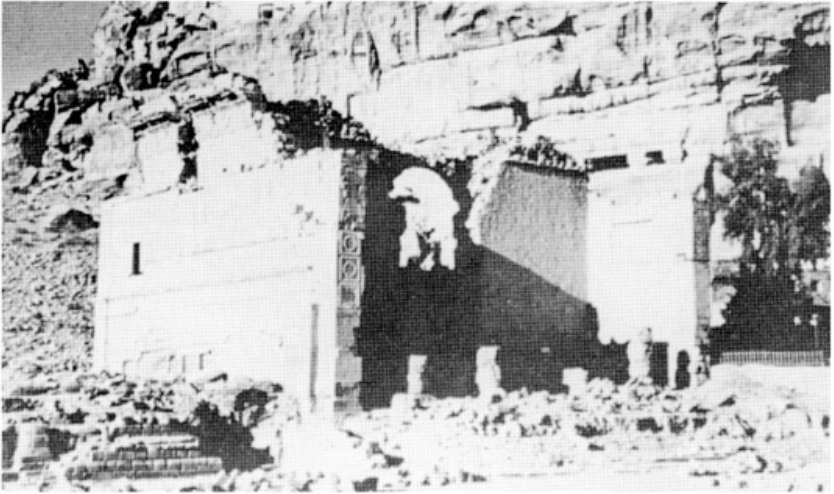
Roman religion flourished particularly in the major cities of Gaul and Britain. Each urban centre would have had a *capitolium*. Jupiter Optimus Maximus was prominent on Hadrian's Wall, and such sites as Birdoswald and Maryport in Cumbria have each yielded more than twenty altars affirming the continued fealty of the troops. Mercury, Mars and the other major Roman deities are well-represented iconographically and epigraphically (Green, 1976, 10–36; 1983).

Caesar lists various deities encountered in Gaul in order of popularity - Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva (*de Bello Gallico* VI, 17). He writes as though the gods were Roman, but all the divinities on Caesar's list underwent celticization to some degree (Thévenot, 1968). Thus Jupiter was identified both with a Celtic Thunderer Taranis, attested from Chester to the Rhineland, and with a Celtic solar god whose emblem was a wheel. Mercury's popularity, alluded to by Caesar, is endorsed by a wealth of archaeological evidence, but he is often linked with local Celtic spirits, like Mercury Dumias at Puy de Dôme and Arvernus among the Arverni. Other non-Roman features include Mercury's depiction as an old man at Lezoux, triple-headed among the Remi, and with a Celtic consort, Rosmerta, in Gaul and western Britain. Mars too had Celtic names attached, implying his identification with local protectors, as with Vesontius at Besançon. Mars was called Lenus, a healer, at Trier and Caerwent. In Britain, Minerva was conflated with a local healer, Sulis, who presided over the great sanctuary at Bath. Apollo's greatest Gaulish role was also healing, and associated with spa-shrines, as at Aix-la-Chapelle and in the Vosges where he was called Grannus. But in the Nettleton (Wiltshire) temple Apollo was a hound-lord 'Cunomaglus'.

Cults which are totally alien to the classical world are present, the only

intrusive influence being physical representation and endowment with names (Green, 1986). Triplism was important, and the potency of 'three' is illustrated by the triplication of several deities including the Matres and Genii Cucullati (pl. 32.6), the hooded *numina* of prosperity. The Deae Matres were worshipped widely; they are portrayed side by side with loaves, fruit or children, as at Bonn and Cirencester. A local mother, Nehalennia, whose emblem was a dog, was invoked in Holland; Epona was a fertility goddess associated with horses; Sucellus was a hammer-god, and his name means 'the Good Striker'. Deities like these were popular and known over wide areas. Others, like Sequana of the Seine and Abandinus at Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, were tied to specific localities.

The importance of animal-symbolism is striking; Epona and Nehalennia show this. But sometimes the theriomorphic element is stronger, and anthropomorphic gods sprout horns. The Brigantes of north Britain favoured horned divinities. In Gaul Cernunnos ('Horned One') is associated with stags and himself bears antlers. Bulls, boars, horses and birds are abundant in iconography. Composite, monstrous animals occur also; the triple-horned bull and ram-horned serpent represent the Celtic habit of enhancing symbolism by addition and multiplication (Green, 1977). Animals, like most divine forms of Celtic origin, reflect the religious emphases of a rural people whose livelihood depended on fertility of crops and the reproductive capacity of beasts, both wild or domestic.



32.1 The temple Kasr-el-Bint at Petra: the shrine of the Nabatean deity Dusares



32.2 Early fourth-century relief of the Genius or Spirit of Salona



32.3 Statue of Isis Noreia from Virunum



32.4 A lead plaque from Romula depicting the Danubian rider deity in duplicate



32.5 The temple of Baal Shamin at Palmyra



32.6 Relief of *Genii Cucullati* from Cirencester

• THE • RISE • OF • • CHRISTIANITY •

Jill Harries

The first five centuries of Christianity pose problems both of history and historiography. For Christian historians prospering under the fourth century Christian Empire, the workings of providence were far from inscrutable. The growth of Christianity from the time of the birth of Christ into a world united by Augustus so that the new religion could spread, to the conversion of Constantine in 312 was, for them, pre-ordained. It was also a demonstration of the power of God over the multifarious gods of the pagans in a world in which power, *potentia*, was to be found in many forms, and Christian writers were quick to combine explanations of the divine will with attacks on pagan interpretations of the past. Orosius, for example, in his *History against the Pagans*, written in 417, argued that the world was far worse off before the birth of Christ, under pagan gods, than it had been since. This polemical or apologetic purpose of Christian historiography inevitably coloured interpretations of the Christian past.

Nor were Christian historians exempt from the characteristics of the time when they wrote. The ‘avenging sword’ of imperial legislation which punished evil-doers had its Christian counterpart in an avenging God. For the writer of the treatise *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, Lactantius, the grim fates that befell most members of the Diocletianic Tetrarchy were appropriate ends for persecutors of Christians; the gory and disgusting details of the death of the arch-persecutor Galerius in 311 underline what enemies of Christianity could expect. True, Christians themselves differed over how far they should employ or adapt themselves to the classical

literary conventions prevalent in the world at large: Cyprian of Carthage in the 250s took a more purist line than did Tertullian fifty years before, or Lactantius fifty years later; Jerome agonized over the imputation that he was more a Ciceronian than a Christian. In practice, however, lettered Christians after Constantine could not escape contemporary literary usages, although they were modified, sometimes brilliantly, as by the great Spanish Christian poet Prudentius, to Christian ends. Thus it became possible to turn the pagans' own weapons against themselves. When in 384 Symmachus, the pagan senator, based part of his argument for the restoration of the Altar of Victory to the Senate-house on the early history of Rome - 'these sacred objects drove Hannibal from our walls, the Gauls from the Capitol' - Ambrose of Milan, in his counterblast to the emperor, used the identical *exempla* to prove the opposite. This cultural and religious milieu common to Symmachus and Ambrose governed their approach both to the literary 'conflict' between Roman paganism and Christianity and to their shared history.

By the time of Ambrose, Christians had already evolved their own form of 'church history', a genre of which the founder was Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. Few researchers were more painstaking than he who, in the late third century, bravely embarked on establishing a chronology for early Christian history in his *Chronicon*. From this followed his *Church History*, which broke new ground both in subject-matter and in its incorporation of original documents unearthed in archives from Alexandria to Edessa. But, pioneer though he was, Eusebius' interpretation of his material was based on several misconceptions. He believed that from the beginning Christianity was prosperous and respectable; hence he accepted uncritically the story that Christianity had found favour with Tiberius (II. 2) and, although aware of the problem of forgery, incorporated as authentic the apocryphal personal correspondence between Christ and Abgar, King of Edessa (I.13). His preconceptions about imperial policy affected his chronology (Barnes, 1981, 14off.); and he viewed heresies as diabolical infiltrations of the Christian body from outside. Most important, Eusebius failed to signal the landmarks or the turning-points in the development of Christianity and his history therefore serves as a quarry for facts rather than as a guide. The modern historian, who seeks to analyse Christianity in the context of Roman imperial society (Judge, 1979), may resort to unevenly distributed earlier sources, but has still a long way to go before a connected narrative of the rise of the Christian Church in Roman society becomes possible.

In the reign of Tiberius, a Jew called Jesus was crucified by the Roman authorities outside the remote and troubled provincial city of Jerusalem. No official, non-Christian, source recorded the event but, by the end of the century, four separate accounts of his teaching, miracles, death and resurrection had come into being, an exceptional number of '*Lives*' for a single teacher. The fact that the founder of Christianity was an historical personage at once distinguished that religion from the host of others that jostled for the allegiance of the subjects of the Roman Empire: unlike the myths on which most mystery cults relied, the story of Christ had really happened.

From the small group of witnesses of Jesus' life and death in Jerusalem and Galilee, the news that the promised Messiah had come was spread to Jews of the Diaspora in other cities of the Empire along routes used by traders and pilgrims. For Peter and James, the leaders in Jerusalem, the main task was to preach the risen Christ to Jews subject to the rigorous demands of the Jewish Law, and many early Christian communities took root among Jewish minority groups in cities and were doubly suspect, both to fellow-Jews as members of an heretical splinter group and to society at large as part of an alien minority. However, the spread of Christianity by these means was rapid: the Christian community in Rome, for example, existed before Peter or Paul ever set foot there. Later Christians, detecting the Divine Purpose in the unifying of the Roman world under Augustus to coincide with the birth of Christ, acknowledged that a common political order, two common languages, Greek and Latin, and easy communications had facilitated the spread of the world-religion. And that religion also spread eastwards to the Euphrates and the colourful mixed communities in the border zone between the Persian and Roman empires: Damascus itself, to which Paul set out to restore a Christian group to the orthodox Jewish fold, lay on the trade-route from Jerusalem to the Euphrates.

The background of Paul of Tarsus, an orthodox Jew and Roman citizen, born in a Greek city famous for philosophy and education, equipped him in language and thought as the 'apostle to the Gentiles'. Whether Christianity would have remained as Peter and James envisaged it, a Jewish splinter group, if Paul had not experienced what he did on the road to Damascus cannot be known. As it was, his missionary journeys through Galatia and Asia, Macedonia and Greece resulted in the founding of new churches (*ecclesiae*) strong enough to hold their own when Paul moved on, although occasionally liable, as Paul's letters to the church at Corinth show, to spiritual pride, misunderstanding and schism. The Pauline letters reveal the practical difficulties of setting up a unified organization at a time when

there was no recognized central authority, problems which continued to affect the early churches. At the same time, the letters show the development of Paul's ideas, the rejection of the way of the Law for that of faith, the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in the coming of Christ, all expressed in the language of the Septuagint to a non-Jewish as well as to a Jewish audience. More than any other individual, Paul gave to the early Church the beginnings both of its organization and its theology.

In the early decades of Christianity, little thought was given to the morrow: the end of the world was too imminent to allow for long-term future planning. But as time went by and the apocalypse failed to materialize, the need for a durable cultic organization grew more apparent. Given the haphazard nature of the spread of Christianity, it is not surprising that initially organization seems to have varied from city to city, consisting of groups either with a single head or a committee of elders: these two main types probably co-existed for a time before episcopal rule by a single head or 'overseer' (*episcopus*) came to prevail. The letters of Ignatius of Antioch, written on his way to martyrdom in *c.* 115, laid emphasis on the respect due to clergy, and especially bishops, and may have accelerated the trend. The prominence of the bishop may also have arisen from the nature of early cultic organization, although little, as yet, is known of this. The material wants of early Christians were few but the emphasis on charity, initially financed by offerings (*oblaciones*) in a liturgical context, and the need for house-churches large enough to be viable meeting-places may have supplied opportunities for patronage for wealthier Christians, as was the case with some pagan cults. Such patrons may even have become bishops and then kept the office in the family; episcopal dynasties are attested in early Christianity, becoming more prominent later.

The early churches were tiny scattered enclaves, inviting by their enthusiasm and their physical distance from each other the dangers of disunity and schism. These were partly avoided by the rise of regional leading churches, Jerusalem, Antioch and Ephesus in the first century, later joined by Rome and Alexandria, which foreshadowed the great ecclesiastical metropolitans of the fourth and later centuries. Their hegemony was probably of a loose and informal nature to start with and, even in the third century, the primacy of Lyon in Gaul seems to have rested on a similarly vague foundation and failed to last into the fourth century. Inevitably, inter-city church organization became more formal and, by the fourth century, its provincial structure reassuringly mirrored that of the secular Empire, with the provincial metropolitan bishop being based, as a rule, in the secular provincial capital. This association of metropolitan

bishop with provincial capital simplified matters but did not allow either for the occasional provincial reorganization or for fluctuations in the fortunes of some cities: the rises of the new holy city of Jerusalem and of the new imperial capital of Constantinople after Constantine and the struggles of their bishops for recognition and supremacy are cases in point.

Heresies were the most obvious threat to the precarious unity of the infant churches. It is easily forgotten that, in the absence of any agreed central authority for the defining of doctrine, 'heresies' often originated from the need of Christians to define and explain their beliefs to themselves and others, to take account of contemporary forms of Gnosticism, or to respond to St Paul's own acceptance of the value of the prophetic gift. The emphasis of the Apostolic Age on prophecy with its apocalyptic overtones had obvious drawbacks as the prospect of the millennium receded: individual inspiration, if unchecked, would destroy the core of belief essential to the unity of the world-religion. Hence the self-appointed spokesmen of the early Church outlawed the prophetic extravagances and personal vision of the Phrygian Montanus and his starry-eyed lady followers; attempts to redefine the nature of Christ as God or man, or to deny that the God of the Law and the Prophets was the father of Christ were likewise adjudged beyond the pale. The authority with later generations, who preserved them, of such works as the *Against Heresies* of Irenaeus of Lyon, written in Greek in the late second century, can obscure the fact that, at the time, the differences between heresy and orthodoxy were not clear-cut. In Carthage in the early third century, the abrasive and eloquent Tertullian espoused Montanist beliefs and turned against his local church organization, yet his works achieved a wide Christian readership. Even in the more structured world of the early fifth century, another African, Augustine, had difficulty in convincing contemporaries that the doctrines of Pelagius, which argued that salvation was possible through the human will, thus excluding the action of divine grace, should be classed as heretical.

Thus the spread of the early Church went wide, especially in the east, but not deep. Threatened as they were with fragmentation from within, the Christian communities had also to contend with hostility and persecution from outside. Within Judaea itself, the Christians of Jerusalem might have been tolerated at the outset, but for public attacks made by such hotheads as the deacon Stephen on the Jewish Law and the opposition of generations of Jews, as he claimed, to the workings of the Holy Spirit. The first to suffer for his faith, Stephen's status as the 'first martyr' was not fully exploited before the miraculous discovery of his relics at Caphar-Gamala in 415 and

their subsequent dissemination over much of the Mediterranean world. In respect of cult, his recognition was somewhat belated compared with that accorded Peter and Paul, who as martyrs and as joint apostolic founders of the Roman Church, were in the fourth century accorded a status analogous to that of Romulus and Remus.

Legend ascribed the deaths of Peter and Paul to the first imperial persecution of Christians, initiated by Nero in and after AD 64. Christians were already perhaps associated in the minds of the authorities with civil disturbances among the Jews and Nero, with his fanciful interest in eastern affairs, may have perceived the Christians as socially subversive religious dissidents, unsanctioned either by antiquity or by their own people. In his need to find scapegoats for the Great Fire of Rome, Nero turned on the Christians in Rome and subjected them to such spectacular cruelty - some were made into human torches in the public gardens - that popular dislike for them was converted into sympathy. But Nero, however eccentric personally, was emperor and his actions could be deemed to have the force of law: thus his persecution of Christians could have set a legal precedent for future emperors.

Christianity, along with Druidism (which had Celtic nationalist implications), stands out as the only persecuted religion in the otherwise tolerant Roman Empire. The legal ground, apart from the Neronian precedent, has been much debated (Ste Croix, 1963 and 1964) but both the Christian apologists and the famous exchange of letters between Pliny as governor of Bithynia and Trajan (Pliny, *Letters* X, 96 and 97) confirm the centrality of the 'name of Christian' (*nomen Christianum*) to any accusation or conviction for adherence to the sect. Pliny informed his emperor that he had investigated allegations of *flagitia* (disgraceful practices) levelled at Christians but had found nothing; willingness to sacrifice and curse Christ was accepted as proof of 'innocence', that is non-adherence to the *nomen*. Moreover, as Trajan reminded Pliny, Christians were not to be hunted out: in other words, they did not fall into the category of dangerous criminals whom it was a governor's duty to pursue. Conversely, stiff-necked would-be martyrs on trial before often bemused governors would assert the *nomen* as their own, 'I am (a) Christian'. Indeed such court records as that of the trial of a Christian group in the small African town of Scillium in 180 (Musurillo, 1972, 86-9) make Pliny's confusion understandable: however well-intentioned the governor, communication between him and the defendants was virtually impossible.

The constancy and suffering of martyrs was exploited to encourage the survivors. The celebration of martyr cults began in a small way in the

second century and accounts of martyrdoms were lovingly preserved. The tone was set by the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, described by Streeter (1930, 165) as 'a man of abnormal psychology', with their ecstatic anticipation of martyrdom in the arena at Rome. 'I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be proved true bread of Christ,' he wrote, evoking the ideas associated with the central secret rite of full Christians, the Eucharist. Open letters between churches recorded the persecution at Smyrna in the mid-150s, where the mob howled for the blood of the aged bishop Polycarp, and of the daughter-churches of Smyrna at Lyon and Vienne in c. 177 (Eusebius, *Church History*, V.1–2). As at Scillium, the most effective testimony of faith might be that offered in the course of interrogation: the confrontation between future martyr and judge or governor could provide considerable scope for drama and rhetoric, the more elaborate as the realities of persecution receded in the generations after Constantine. But the most striking document to survive from a period of persecution is the record of the experiences of a Carthaginian woman catechumen in 203, who became a mother in prison and whose dreams, as recorded in the *Passion of Perpetua*, have the ring of psychological truth. Such descriptions served to stiffen the resolve of Christians but were also an expression of a more general feeling among Christians of piety towards their dead, which was also shown in gatherings in graveyards commented on unfavourably and distorted by pagan contemporaries. Martyrs were not yet the foci of spiritual power and heavenly patronage that they were to become in the fourth century but the early concern shown for preserving the relics of the dead - the Lyon martyrs were cast into the Rhone to prevent this - provided the foundation for later developments.

Faced with this bulk of laudatory evidence, it is hard to realize that many Christian communities in cities in the second century may have been preserved from persecution simply by their obscurity. The casual attitude of the Pergamene physician Galen (born in 130), who may have been hazy as to the differences between Jews and Christians, may be typical of pagan indifference in general. For Galen, Moses was interesting because he had something to say, with which Galen disagreed, on the function of the divine in connection with the question of why hair grows and needs to be cut, while eyelashes do not. On Christians specifically Galen commented in passing that their pursuit of justice was in no way inferior to that of 'true' philosophers, a somewhat backhanded compliment which hardly implies profound knowledge of, or interest in, Christianity. The fact was that the average Pergamene would have been more interested in the great local shrine of Asclepius, a centre for pilgrimage which formed the base for a

flourishing tourist industry, than in a fringe group. Yet such indifference need not have entailed hostility and the Pergamene protests recorded at the martyrdoms of their fellow-citizens Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice may well have been genuine.

Thus many Christian groups survived unmolested, protected by their obscurity and pagan tolerance, as a rule, of religious eccentricity. But at times of disaster or unrest, Christians were an obvious scapegoat. Popular prejudice, which was combated strenuously by the apologists, ascribed to Christians the practice of incest and cannibalism, accusations based respectively on misunderstandings of Christian brotherly love and of the eating of the 'body of Christ' in the Eucharist. Moreover, and perhaps worse, the Christian religion excluded the worship of other gods and this could be interpreted as 'atheism', which the offended gods were liable to punish by visiting their wrath on the whole community. At such times informers grew more active, the city mob was roused and the governor, as at Smyrna and Lyon, was obliged to take action. But such outbreaks were not imperially initiated and the emperor was involved only in that he might be appealed to if the fates of Roman citizens were at stake.

Despite Christian praises of martyrs and the inspiration for conversion they may have supplied, persecution was not welcomed by Christians in general. The aim of apologists for Christianity was to explain Christian belief and practice and, insofar as they were read by non-Christians, to break down the misunderstandings which threatened Christians. The growing wish on the part of some Christians to make themselves intelligible and acceptable to contemporary intellectuals can be shown both in individual cases, like that of Tertullian who couched his message in the language of the Second Sophistic (Barnes, 1971), and in broader developments, such as the founding of a school of Christian learning in Alexandria by Pantaenus in 180, that was to nurse the talents of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Such men as Tertullian both celebrated martyrs and, through their explanations of Christianity, sought to undermine the hostility that was one cause of persecution. The same complex of attitudes can be found in Eusebius who, while a devotee of martyrs, nevertheless saw the Great Persecution as an evil, ascribing it to the anger of God at his lax and quarrelsome Church, and accepted that a bishop's duty to keep his congregation together at a time of crisis might be more important than ensuring his personal place in heaven through martyrdom. One of Eusebius' heroes, Dionysius of Alexandria, was, in the mid-third century, kidnapped by friends concerned for his safety and stranded in a desert until the danger was past, while Cyprian of Carthage in 251 withdrew from the

city to avoid arrest, although six years later, under Valerian, he chose to stay and suffer for his faith.

The Decian persecution of 250–1 was the first imperially-initiated attack on Christians on an empire-wide basis. It stemmed from an edict which compelled all subjects of the Empire to sacrifice to the traditional gods of Rome and was clearly an attempt to regain the favour of the gods for the troubled Empire. Only when it became apparent that Christians would not do so (and might therefore offend the gods) were they singled out for special treatment. Decius himself died in battle in 251 but persecution was renewed under Valerian in the late 250s and continued sporadically thereafter.

It was ironic that emperors intervened precisely at the point when Christianity had become socially acceptable in many cities. By the late third century, public churches, like the one at Nicomedia opposite the imperial palace, were taking the place of house-churches and the charity of some Christian communities was extensive and munificent, as at Rome, where widows and other recipients of charity numbered fifteen hundred. While Christian organizations remained, it seems, comparatively unaffected by the social and economic difficulties of the third century, which may have dried up the sources of support for some publicly-financed pagan cults (Geffcken, 1978, 25–30), their leaders were also poised to play a part in the intellectual, philosophical flowering of the time. That they were by now treated seriously is demonstrated by the famous attack of Plotinus' pupil Porphyry on the Christians; his arguments were to be reused by the emperor Julian in his own assault on the 'Galilaeans'. Persecution of Christians may now have required the intellectual justification that it was given by the publications of some Diocletianic philosophers (Barnes, 1981).

Persecution culminated with the edicts of Diocletian and Galerius against Christians in February 303 : churches were to be destroyed, the scriptures banned and known Christians were to lose office, if they held it, and be imprisoned; a further edict stated that Church officials were to be put in prison and made to sacrifice (Eusebius, *Church History* VIII. 2; Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 12). The approach was similar to that of previous emperors: those who sacrificed were to be let off but the Christian group identity was to be destroyed by the loss of meeting-places, sacred books and community leaders. The fact that the Bible could be looked down upon because of its unconventional style did not alter its importance as a mainstay of Christian belief in the eyes of persecutors and persecuted alike.

Although the persecution proved unworkable because of the sheer numbers of clergy, who filled the prisons and left no room for real criminals, it was still terrifying to its victims at the time and many simple souls, confronted with the harsh apparatus of a police state, would have succumbed (Dix, 1945, 24–6). Just as in the 250s Cyprian and others had confronted the problem of those who had lapsed through fear and later begged readmittance, recommending leniency, so too in the sequel to the Diocletianic persecutions Christians had to decide on the fate of the lapsed and of those who had handed over (*traditores*) sacred books to search parties of soldiers. At Rome in the 250s, leniency had sparked off the Novatian schism, when followers of Novatus refused to accept repentance as a reason to be readmitted. Similarly in Africa in the early years of Constantine the Donatists refused to recognize the consecration of a bishop of Carthage, in which an alleged *traditor* was one of the consecrating bishops, and proved so successful in establishing themselves as a ‘Church of the Martyrs’ that they formed virtually an alternative Church in Africa throughout the fourth century and required stern measures, spearheaded by Augustine of Hippo, to put them down (Freund, 1952; Brown, 1967, 330–5).

Historians from the time of Constantine onwards have seen the conversion of that emperor as inaugurating a new era for Christianity. Given that imperial edicts, however unenforceable they may sometimes have been, nevertheless had considerable social implications, and that an emperor’s religion might well become that of many of his followers for reasons of convenience, Constantine’s adherence to the new faith is rightly regarded as a watershed, but the break with the past can be exaggerated. As we have seen, the growth in the wealth of some churches, like that at Rome, the increased social and intellectual importance of Christianity and the growth of Christian willingness to communicate with pagans in their own terms predated the conversion of Constantine. Lavish imperial and senatorial donations under Constantine and his successors rapidly increased the assets and thus the social and economic importance of churches in the cities of the Empire but the charitable (and building) purposes for which Church funds were administered and held ‘in trust’ by the bishops and clergy remained unaltered. And just as Tertullian or Origen had employed the language and thought of the contemporary world to explain their case and refute their opponents, so aristocratic Christian literati of the fourth and fifth centuries justified themselves and sought to convert pagan friends through cultivated citations of, and allusions to, Cicero, Vergil, Horace or other classical authors: despite qualms of conscience that afflicted such purists as Jerome or the ascetic Gallic senator-turned-priest Paulinus of

Nola, most Christians felt they communicated most effectively through the medium of the literary exercises fashionable at the time. Thus although imperial and aristocratic patronage was to change the face of Christianity, its evolution progressed on lines already established before 312.

The effect of imperial legislation in isolation on paganism is hard to assess, because of the varying social contexts in which it was, or was not, implemented. Certainly, repeated legislation by the successors of Constantine gradually ate away at the social and financial supports of the public pagan cults, but some laws may have been more bombastic than effective. In 341, for example, Constantius II declared, 'Let superstition cease. Let the madness of sacrifice be rooted out'; yet in Rome itself in 359, the prefect of the City, Tertullus, publicly sacrificed to Castor and Pollux for the safe arrival of the grain ships. For the followers of *all* religions, the indispensable feature of state offerings to the tutelary deity was that they were publicly subsidized; hence Constantine's insistence that the clergy should not be distracted from their full-time duty, which was to conduct divine service for the good of the state. This belief underlies the efforts of the pagan senator Symmachus in the 380s to have the Altar of Victory, removed by Gratian in 382, restored to the Senate-house and to have pagan cults publicly subsidized. Symmachus and his like-minded friends could well afford to make sacrifices on their own account but no one, however rich, was empowered to offer on behalf of the state from his own resources, the use of which could guarantee only his individual welfare. The edicts of Theodosius I against paganism in the early 390s (*Theodosian Code*, XVI. 10.10 and 10.12), a short-lived usurpation in the west (392–4) characterized by a very limited pagan revival (O'Donnell, 1978) and the final removal of subsidies by Theodosius spelled the end for state paganism. With the state cults departed the protection of the state gods and thus, wrote the pagan Byzantine historian Zosimus, 'the Roman Empire gradually declined and became the home of barbarians' (*New History*, IV. 5 9.3).

But legislation, as the expression of an emperor's standpoint, had social repercussions which partly depended on pre-existing conditions. The accession of the pagan Julian in 361 immediately sparked off riots in Alexandria, where the controversial bishop George was lynched: but it was the peculiar combination of the Arian controversy, long-standing racial disharmony, and the provocative utterances of the bishop against pagans in Alexandria itself which led to his destruction (in which Christians opposed to him may also have joined). Likewise the strongly pro-Christian attitudes and legislation of Theodosius I and his western colleagues coincided with

widespread destruction of pagan shrines, such as those engaged in by the monk-bishop Martin of Tours in the Gallic countryside. Thus the emperor's will became a factor in local affairs, lending strength to one side or the other in pre-existing internecine struggles between Christian and traditional pagan groups, which occasionally erupted into violence against temples, often the objects of anti-pagan legislation, or, from the other side, against bishops as the main foci of Christian power and authority.

In the cities of the Empire, and in the imperial consistory, the pagan-Christian conflict was a reality, expressed through direct physical action and the making of laws. In the field of literature, however, it has a shadowy and one-sided quality. Attacks were made on the morality of the old Olympian gods through stories that few pagans now took literally and arguments were adduced from Tertullian and other long-dead Church fathers; but these modes of expression, to us unconvincing, were the product of the traditionalism of methods of argument among the cultured of the Roman world. More significant for the relationship of literature with reality is that a number of polemics against pagans were associated with events in the wider world: the unpleasant little pamphlet, *A Poem against the Pagans* with perhaps the death of the great pagan senator Praetextatus in 384; or Prudentius' *Against Symmachus* with the Roman victory over the Goths at Pollentia in northern Italy in 402. On a vastly different level, Augustine's monumental *City of God* grew out of his thoughts on the Fall of Rome in 410 and conclusively dissociated the assertion of the power of God from the survival of the ephemeral Empire. For thinkers like Augustine, Providence and the place of God in history were central Christian preoccupations; but they also derived from Christian interpretations of the contractual relationship of god with man which was basic to ancient religious experience. The bargain on both sides must be seen to be kept.

For in fact, despite Christian assertions to the contrary, pagan and Christian beliefs were, throughout antiquity, rooted in the same religious soil. Monotheism, for example, was not unique to Christians; the soldier Ammianus, who had little time for certain types of philosopher, casually accepted that human affairs were governed by a 'divine power' (*numen*) and that the decrees of fate were inescapable; among more sophisticated thinkers, too, general assumptions were made as to the existence of a supreme deity, who stood at the head of a variety of philosophically invented divine hierarchies, and had features in common with the figure of the emperor, who was progressively and publicly raised through display and ceremonial above the heads of his Roman subjects. Among

philosophers, Christianity battled with, and took over, many features of Neo-Platonism: the conversion of the Neo-Platonist Marius Victorinus in the late fourth century and to some extent of Augustine, was a natural outcome of the merging of the two worlds. Such men, pagan and Christian, who were prepared to adapt their message in order to explain it, contrast with the uncompromising Julian, whose edicts as emperor undermining Christianity and promoting his idiosyncratic Hellenic form of philosophical paganism were not favourably received: even his ardent supporter Ammianus disapproved of Julian's edict forbidding Christian teachers to teach the pagan classics. Moreover, Ammianus was obviously worried by the last pagan emperor's addiction to the theurgic rites and beliefs espoused by the 'magician' Maximus of Ephesus and saw the failure of Julian's Persian expedition as bound up with his ignoring of divination and omens of a traditional kind and excessive devotion to 'philosophers'.

Christians therefore both adapted themselves to current religious usages and challenged them. Mystery cults, with their obvious similarities to Christianity, were an embarrassment and in the 340s the convert Firmicus Maternus proclaimed that the ritual aspects of mystery cults were a diabolical parody of the true faith. In the streets of the cities of the Empire, the processions of Isis, featured in Apuleius, and other pagan gods (MacMullen, 1981) were gradually replaced by the liturgical progresses of bishops and the remains of saints (although Isis was still publicly celebrated in Italy in the early fifth century); and pagan pilgrimages to such sites as the Asclepeium at Pergamon were superseded by the new tourist attractions of the holy sites in Jerusalem and Judaea associated with the life of Christ and promoted by Constantine and his mother Helena (Hunt, 1982a). Finally, Christianity was in tune with the prevailing moral tone of the fourth century, austere, even self-righteous, virtuous and grandiloquent, the language alike of Christian apologetic and of imperial legislation. Moral uprightness was common to virtuous pagan and Christian alike: the epitaph of the pagan *senatrix*, Fabia Aconia Paulina, 'nurse of modesty, bond of chastity . . . gift of the gods who bind our marriage couch with friendly and modest ties', could almost be that of any Christian matron.

Thus the strength of Christianity in the fourth century lay in its ability to harness the diverse trends of society to the service of the universal religion. In so doing it inevitably was affected by contemporary language and ideas of a non-Christian, and even a non-religious, kind. Imperial patronage was acknowledged in fulsome panegyric in the language of the time, sometimes, it is thought (Kee, 1981), to the detriment of Christian integrity. The splendour and power of God were envisaged in the visual and literary

terms associated with the emperor, his court and the senate on earth; thus martyrs were adlected into the 'heavenly senate' and Christ was depicted enthroned with his apostles in the manner of Roman court painting. On a less obvious level, benefits similar to those achieved by cities through the physical presence (*praesentia*) of emperors were also ascribed to the *praesentia* of saints (Brown, 1981). Likewise, the acts of public patronage and munificence by the rich which had sustained the workings of society for centuries, retained their old lavish splendour, albeit in Christian guise; in 396, the wealthy senator Pammachius distributed food to the poor in St Peter's in the traditional manner of scattering largess to the masses. Pammachius was one of several senators to make a much publicized renunciation of worldly wealth and status - with the assurance of continued 'noble' and 'senatorial' standing in the hereafter.

Language and visual display were only the superficial signs of the means by which the Church was not only adapting to society but was also coming to perform important social functions - although such display was a necessary concomitant of real power in late Roman society. As patrons of their congregations, bishops could be more powerful in their cities than many a secular magnate, not only through their control of church finance but also through the network of episcopal connections open to every bishop and many a prominent cleric to exploit. The letters of Augustine, Ambrose, Paulinus of Nola and Synesius of Cyrene, to name but a few, repeatedly document the workings of patronage, the rendering and receiving of favours for clients often employed as postmen, and the genteel arm-twisting that transcended provincial and religious barriers. In the episcopal courts first recognized by Constantine, the jurisdiction of the bishop was independent of the state, faster (some secular cases could take more than thirty years) and far less expensive. Enlightened bishops saw their role in terms of reconciliation rather than judgment and were resorted to as righters of wrongs rather than as pursuers of the guilty. In an age of brutal punishments, in which torture and burnings alive were commonplace, the Christian method of justice offered a humane and welcome alternative.

As always, social influence was linked to and backed by economic power. The enormous wealth of the Roman Church, already well off in the third century, dated from the donations of Constantine and as late as the sixth century was administered on traditional secular lines, with *conductores* in charge of the organization of ecclesiastical lands and the collection of revenue. To fourth-century pagans, the wealth of the Roman Church was notorious: Praetextatus, whose unpopularity with such Christians as Jerome may have stemmed from his refusal to take them

seriously, once joked, 'Make me Bishop of Rome, and I'll become a Christian right away.' Naturally, provincial churches also benefited from pious donations, most welcome when in the form of antiquity's best investment, land. However, the haphazard nature of such gifts must have created inequalities of wealth between the churches of different cities. Certainly some bishops perceiving the chance of a donation may have brought discreet pressure to bear on a possible benefactor: the comment of a fifth-century Gallic bishop to the donor of an estate to the Church, that God had rewarded him for his kindness by allowing him to inherit a larger one, shows the confusion of values that could result, as well as the bishop's ability to recommend piety in practical terms. For, like their secular land-owning counterparts, bishops, while devoting much of their revenues to obligatory charitable work, nevertheless ran their affairs on hard-headed and, by ancient standards, commercial lines. In a year of famine in the 470s the bishop of Lyon fed much of the Rhône corridor and Aquitaine from corn out of his personal resources, but in normal years he would have sold it. Tax advantages and exemptions granted to the Church and its agents further underlined its economic power (Whittaker, 1983).

Thus gradually as patrons, land-owners, judges and city magnates, Christian bishops adapted themselves to the secular structure of the Roman state. Yet this identification had its dangers. Imperial generosity was liable to lead to imperial control and bishops, while claiming to associate with emperors without fear, were in practice often cowed. From Constantine at Nicaea in 325 through to the involvement of the eastern emperors Theodosius II and Marcian in the Monophysite controversy, bishops were pressurized and virtually controlled by their imperial sponsors, even on matters of doctrine. The most conspicuous exception to this rule, Ambrose of Milan, asserted his will over the young emperors Gratian and Valentinian II in the 380s and brought Theodosius I to his knees in 391, but when Eugenius, backed by prominent pagans, seized power in 392, Ambrose beat a hasty diplomatic retreat to Florence and waited there to ascertain the mood of the new administration. Ambrose's control of emperors was based largely on his control of a loyal and excitable congregation in an imperial capital, combined with his own forceful and at times ruthless personality; the removal of the imperial court to Ravenna five years after his death denied similar opportunities to his successors.

Prosperity brought other dangers. Land-ownership by bishops, who personally controlled a quarter of their church's total revenues, could be seen as a contradiction of their role as champions of the poor and needy, to whom the wealth of the churches properly belonged. Episcopal chairs came

to be sought by undesirable candidates for the wrong reasons. At Rome in 367 riots broke out between two contenders for the papal chair, Damasus and Ursinus, and their followers, which were quashed by the intervention of the City Prefect, Praetextatus; Ammianus looked with disfavour on their ambition and the lavish displays which ran counter to the modest behaviour and humility of provincial bishops, which alone, to Ammianus, 'is pleasing to God'. But even the provinces were not exempt from electoral corruption. In the small port town of Chalon-sur-Saône in the 460s, the episcopal chair was sought by a degenerate noble, an owner of kitchens who promised his partisans free food, and a third character who promised a redistribution of church lands; all three were rejected by the metropolitan bishop, Patiens of Lyon, who was called in to settle the affair. Such worldly preoccupations, and the pressures of lay patronage locally exercised, could well have rendered bishops little more than mitred offshoots of the Roman state. Indeed, when a group of Gallic bishops in 386 acquiesced in the execution by the secular power of the Spanish heretic leader Priscillian and his noble lady followers, some were convinced that the Church was already the prisoner of the state and that the hour of the Antichrist was at hand.

Chief among the opponents of the execution of Priscillian was Martin of Tours, one of the founders of western monasticism, who established monasteries at Liguge and Marmoutiers before being controversially elected bishop of Tours in 373. Because Martin, Jerome and others in the late fourth century questioned the values of the organized Church, the monastic movement itself can be interpreted as a reaction against ecclesiastical corruption and involvement with the state and temporal concerns. Thus Jerome repeatedly urged friends and disciples to abandon the bustle of the city for a monastic life, while Martin was convinced that by becoming a bishop he had diminished his personal holiness.

But monasticism did not originate as a movement of protest. The pattern was set early in the fourth century by Antony in Egypt. Having imbibed ascetic ideas and practices from holy men already living on the fringes of cities, Antony withdrew deep into the desert, as none had done before him, but not to solitude. The desert world of Antony was as thickly populated with demons as was a city with people and, so far from being a withdrawal from the world, Antony's desert sojourn was a confrontation with its profoundest spiritual dangers and the strength that he derived from the struggle enabled him to fill a role closely related to the needs of contemporary society. For Antony had to cope not only with demons but also with a constant stream of visitors, petitioners and even philosophers, with whom, despite his lack of literary learning, he successfully disputed.

Nor were his visitors in search only of advice or spiritual counsel: Antony also acted as arbiter in matters of litigation, giving wise advice to judges and military commanders alike. Athanasius' biography of Antony, written after Antony's death in 356, might be thought to project on to the saint a respectability that he did not in fact have, but an Egyptian papyrus shows that a monk, Isak of Karanis, was an acceptable witness in an assault and battery case before the prefect of Egypt as early as 324.

Athanasius' biography of Antony publicized his achievement in both east and west, and was read at the imperial court itself. In Egypt, Syria and Palestine, hardy souls took to a life of fasting and prayer in the desert, in solitary caves (Jerome's in Syria was large enough to house his library), in gatherings of huts which allowed for both solitude and communal life, and, as time went on, in more organized communities. Inevitably the merits of the solitary, or eremitic, and communal, or coenobitic, modes of life were compared and a body of monastic literature evolved, establishing rules and justifying monastic modes of life (Rousseau, 1978). Such works present an idealized picture, although problems were not glossed over, and it should be remembered that monasticism too had its darker side. Jerome in the 370s was disillusioned by the squalor and arrogance of the Syrian monks and the monks of Nitria were notorious for violence and rioting. Such notable bad examples were, however, isolated and less potentially damaging, perhaps, for the future of monasticism than attempts by Jerome and his like to keep separate the roles of monk and member of the organized, city-based, clergy.

For in fact church and monastery needed each other. True to form, bishops like Ambrose and Augustine were quick to harness the spiritual energies of monasticism to the service of the churches they headed. Such bishops, often in concert with lay patrons of monks, brought monastic communities into cities, or just outside their walls, and thus more closely under the episcopal eye. Conversely, the strict anti-materialism of monastic ideology, whatever its realization in practice, was a reminder of Christian values older than those of Constantine. Such values could be given a new twist in a fourth-century setting: display based on sackcloth and ashes could be as potent a force as that based on gold vestments and splendid carriages. Thus the great monastic houses, particularly in the west, became nurseries for future bishops and it became something of the fashion for scions of local and senatorial notables to have a spell of training at such centres as the island monastery at Lerins, off Cannes, founded by Honoratus in c. 410. Products of this training went on to occupy episcopal chairs and combined the abilities, and the aristocratic assumptions, of noble or administrative families with the spiritual powers of servants of Christ.

Ultimately, the rise of Christianity depended on the assertion of power and on its definition, or redefinition, in contemporary terms. The dispensing of wealth through charity and other forms of conventional patronage could be no more than a backup to the exercise of authority over the spirit world, which was of immediate practical relevance on every social level. Most obviously, this authority was demonstrated in the working of miracles, the casting out of demons, healing of the sick, raising of the dead. The true miracle was proof of sanctity, of God working through his authorized instrument, and the false miracle-worker was liable to be painfully confounded. But the power of sanctity to work miracles lay not only with the living but with the holy dead, with saints whose bones and shrines became the objects of international pilgrimage and devotion, and of local piety. Augustine, initially a sceptic, went to some trouble to collect miracles attested for his relics of St Stephen, brought to Africa by Orosius from the east after their discovery in 415.

Such saints were more than wonder-workers: they were patrons, protectors and, for some, friends. Their special relationship with their cities guaranteed their intercession with God for their clients and, on occasion, their intervention to protect their people from enemies: Alaric and his Visigoths, the sackers of Rome in 410, are supposed to have been turned back from Nola, near Naples, by a miraculous appearance by the local saint, Felix. For Christians successfully to assert that former human beings could act as heavenly patrons was itself a revolutionary achievement and a mark of the effect of Christianity on ancient belief. For it owed something to Christian assertion of a 'God made man'; to Christians' traditional devotion to their dead as shown in the grave-feasts so suspected by pagans of the second century and in the preservation, where possible, of the relics of their martyrs; to the 'friendship' with the divine felt by Christian and pagan philosophers; and to the unsettled state of the late Roman world, even in the fourth century, which rendered the more urgent the need for a friend at the heavenly court (Brown, 1981). The patronage of saints was more effective if the saint was physically present in the shape of relics, either locally owned or discovered, or begged, acquired or stolen from elsewhere. Failing the presence of relics, association with the life or death of past martyrs was enough to ensure their protective interest, and beyond the local saints were the great international patrons, Peter and Paul, or Stephen, the first martyr, who had their proper places in liturgical calendars.

Christianity rose to become the dominant religion of the Roman Empire in a world conscious of the manifold workings of *potentia*, of power both

material and spiritual. In the beginning it was without obvious power, suffering from disunity, from the inherent paradox of being 'in the world but not of it', from heresies and from persecution. The survival of many churches in the second century must have been often precarious. Yet Christians turned these drawbacks to their advantage, obedient to the state yet keeping their distance, outlawing heretics, yet profiting from the intellectual vitality and questioning of which they were a symptom, venerating their martyrs and advertising their sufferings as 'witnesses' to their faith, and thus paving the way for the flowering of the cults of the saints in the fourth century. The conversion of Constantine brought with it recognition and freedom from fear, economic advantages and enhanced opportunities for the exercise of episcopal and clerical patronage, and of power in a secular sense. Yet at the same time the Church was drawn more closely into the deadly embrace of the state. Once again, however, the balance was, in the long-term, rectified: the otherworldly values of monasticism, or of the City of God, were reasserted and western bishops relied on them, and on their authority in their respective cities, as Roman political rule in the west crumbled in the fifth century. In the early sixth century, Caesarius of Aries commented apropos the Crucifixion that God could not simply have exercised his *potentia* against the Devil without further ado because such an act would have been devoid of justice (*iustitia*). The assertion of that principle, too, had ensured that the Church survived the ending of emperors in the west.

• BURIAL • CUSTOMS • OF •
ROME •
• AND • THE • PROVINCES •

Richard Jones

In the end all Romans died. It is fitting then to look, in this last section on religion and beliefs, at how they died, how their remains were disposed of, and how they were commemorated. In doing so, our most immediate contact is made with the individuals who lived in the Roman World. The remains of people and the residues of those ceremonies they used to take them through the universal experience of death are dealt with directly. Yet as in so many aspects of the study of the Roman World, care must be taken in the use of the different kinds of evidence that are available. In particular, the abundant literary and artistic evidence for funerary practices must be handled with caution. Literary works, fine bas-reliefs, or even tombstones were all made for the relatively prosperous upper classes of Roman society and were themselves expressions of Roman traditions. As such, they cannot be taken automatically as indicators of the meanings of what was done in the burials of the masses of the population. The only information to be gained about the humble people who made up most of the population of the Roman Empire is to be found in the archaeology of their burial-places. There the interpretation of what archaeologists have discovered has more in common with the approaches of prehistoric study than of classical literature or art history. Nevertheless, one of the greatest assets to the study of Roman burial is that there is a substantial amount of information about the rituals which surrounded the burial of the remains which survive for the excavator.

Even though such evidence and what is known about ideas on the after-life may both relate to a classical Roman ideal of what was supposed to happen, it is interesting to see what can be found to tell how far these ideals were followed and how they related to the local native traditions in the provinces.

Most of the evidence for burial rituals comes from occasional references in the classical authors and bas-reliefs showing scenes from the ceremonies. These have been brought together in a clear account by Professor Jocelyn Toynbee (1971, 43–64). When death was thought near, the family gathered. The closest relative gave a last kiss to catch the dying person's soul, which was thought to leave the body with the last breath, and then closed the eyes. The close relatives then shouted their grief and called the dead person's name. The body was washed, anointed, dressed and laid out for the lying-in-state, probably with a coin for Charon's fee placed in the mouth. Many tombstones and other reliefs show the body lying on a couch, often surrounded by mourners (e.g. pl. 34.1). After the lying-in-state, which might last for only one day, but sometimes extended to a week, the body was carried to the cemetery in a procession of relatives and friends of the deceased wearing black. An elaborate funeral procession is shown on a relief from Amiternum in Italy (pl. 34.2). There the procession is accompanied by pipers, a trumpeter and horn blowers as well as hired professional mourners, a Roman practice that followed Etruscan traditions. These arrangements in upper-class funerals were organized by professional undertakers, called *libitinarii*. It seems that poorer people's funerals followed the same kind of pattern. Certainly all corpses had to be taken outside the town or city for disposal, a rule laid down in the early Roman law, the Twelve Tables, and quoted by Cicero (*On the laws*, 2,23,5 8): 'the dead shall be neither buried nor burnt in the city'. It was this ruling which was rigorously followed throughout the Empire and brought about the characteristic topography of the Roman town, whereby the roads leading to the town were lined with cemeteries. What was true of Rome itself and Pompeii in Italy was true of Canterbury in Britain or Trier in Germany (pl. 34.3; figs 34.1 and 34.2). The peculiarly 'Roman' nature of this practice can be over-emphasized, since it is such a frequent custom of most societies to separate formally the places of the living from those of the dead. It makes for a healthier way of living and is also influenced by various ideas on the spiritual 'pollution' associated with the dead. Given these factors, and the fact that urbanized life in general in the Empire was given a Roman shape, it is hardly surprising that burial places conformed to a common standard.

Once in the cemetery, during the early Empire the body was normally burnt, usually in a place set aside for cremations, called the *ustrinum*. Sometimes the cremation took place at the spot where the ashes were to be buried, normally over a grave already dug. This style of cremation was known as a *bustum* grave. Gifts and personal possessions of the deceased were sometimes put on the pyre for burning with the body. When the corpse was burnt, the fire was put out with wine and then the remains were collected from the *ustrinum* and normally put into some sort of container, which could range from a gold casket or marble chest to a simple pottery jar or cloth bag. The container was then placed either in some kind of built tomb-structure, or buried in the ground, often with more objects to accompany the remains into the after-life.

After the funeral itself, there was a series of rituals to be followed to confirm the grave legally and to purify the relatives. A funerary meal, the *silicernium*, was eaten on the day of the funeral at the grave; another, the *cena novendialis*, took place to mark

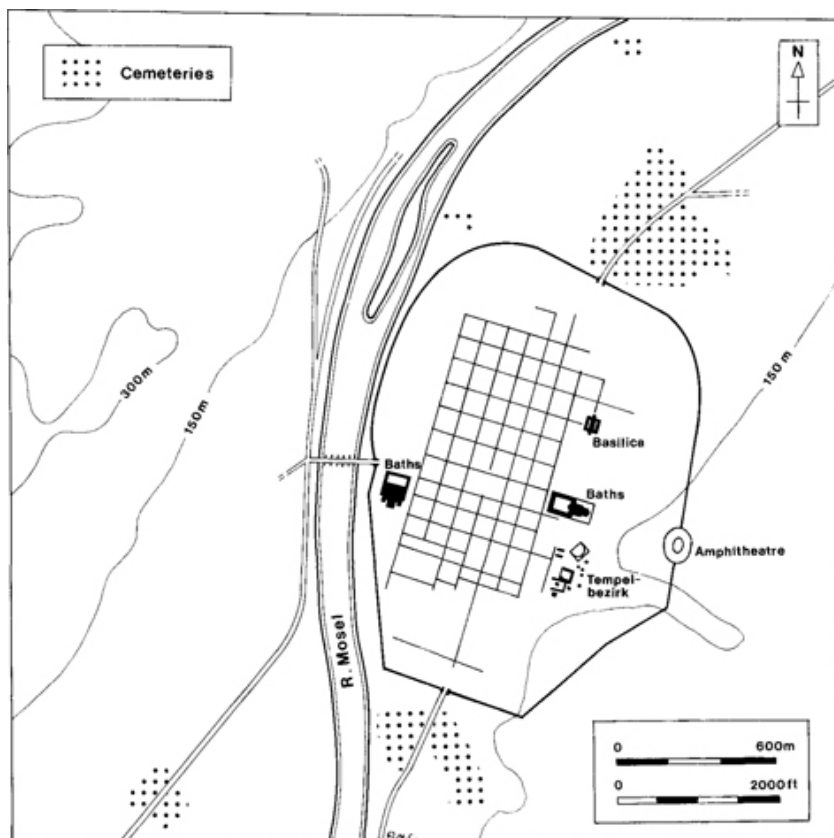


Figure 34.1 Trier with cemetery areas (after Thomas)

the end of full mourning after nine days. The dead continued to be remembered, on their birthdays, and more generally in two important religious festivals the *Parentalia* and the *Lemuria*. At the *Parentalia* people visited the graves of their dead relatives, took small gifts, perhaps food or flowers, and had a meal at the grave. Some more elaborate tombs included a kitchen and a well for these functions. These were far from being solemn occasions. Tomb inscriptions encouraged the living to enjoy themselves, but sometimes they may have become more lively than might be expected: some early Christian writers criticized pagans for getting too drunk at such gatherings.

These ceremonies are known from references which largely date to the late first century BC and the first century AD. Strictly the information applies only to this period and to the most romanized, upper sectors of society. However, the archaeology suggests that the picture created can also be applied rather more widely, but it must not be thought



Figure 34.2 Canterbury with cemetery areas (after *Canterbury Archaeological Trust*)

that ideas and customs of burial were static and universal. They varied from place to place and were constantly changing over time, sometimes rapidly. Archaeology has discovered both general trends and some curious and exceptional practices.

At this point, it is worthwhile to give a brief typology of the actual kinds of Roman grave most often found. Stated simply, there are cremation graves and inhumation graves. The cremations can be split between those burnt at an *ustrinum* and subsequently buried elsewhere and *bustum* graves (p. 813 above). Where the human remains were taken from the *ustrinum*, they may or may not have been put in the ground with some of the ashes from the pyre. Many cremation graves were furnished with grave goods, often unburnt in the pyre. Most commonly these were pottery vessels for food and drink, such as bowls, flagons and beakers, but lamps, brooches and small perfume flasks were also included, as well as an enormous variety of other things which occasionally turn up in graves and must have had some special significance for the deceased (pls 34.4 and 34.5). Inhumations which were most common in the late Roman period were provided with grave goods markedly less frequently than cremations, though the practice survived. The main area of variance in inhumations is in their grave structures and orientation. Sometimes the body was protected by an arrangement of roof-tiles or stones or a broken amphora, or the grave was lined with stones. A wooden coffin was also used quite frequently (fig. 34.17). In fact all these types followed traditions already used for cremation graves. It is easy to distinguish whether or not the burials in an inhumation cemetery followed a system of regular alignment.

However, beyond the normal range of burials, there were some unusual and even bizarre practices. At the site of Skeleton Green in Hertfordshire in

Britain, Calvin Wells's study of the cremated remains showed that there were quite clear variations in the presence of particular bones in the urns buried. Skull bones were missing surprisingly often, suggesting that fragments may have been kept by relatives (Wells, 1981). Unfortunately, since cremations have rarely been studied in such exemplary detail, there are few other examples of such practices. Inhumation graves allow the easier recognition of anomalous practices. In Britain, decapitated skeletons have been found from more than fifty sites of the Roman period, as well as from another thirty Anglo-Saxon sites. The detached head is usually found towards the feet. Many suggestions have been made to explain this phenomenon: was it to stop the dead from walking, to lay the ghost; was it to sacrifice an 'expendable' member of the community or was it to execute a criminal? However, there is as yet no explanation with more claims to be believed than any other (Harman, Molleson and Price, 1981). If from time to time, unusual things were done to the human remains, there are also practices in the choice of grave goods which have attracted attention. Normally the carrying of weapons by civilians in the Empire was forbidden, but there are graves containing weapons known in many places in northern Gaul and Germany and some from the Roman period in Britain. It seems unlikely that they were all soldiers and more likely that the continuity of a pre-Roman Iron Age custom is being observed, perhaps with the change that the deceased might have claimed that the weapons were for hunting and therefore legal (van Doorselaer, 1967, 185–99).

A common thread which links all that has so far been said about funerary ceremonies, both the commonplace and the exceptional, is that they express ideas about an after-life. Such ideas are often linked with religion, but the exact nature of how religion and burial were linked in the Roman world needs some clarification. Undoubtedly, attitudes to the dead and to some kind of after-life are profoundly religious in a general sense. They are part of how people see themselves fitting into the world and how they seek to explain the great mysteries of life and death. What is more difficult is to argue that in the Empire specific religions required specific funerary practices. It can be said that Roman paganism included the system of ideas on an after-life which found expression in the furnishing of the grave for the comfort of the deceased (pl. 34.5). There is very little evidence for particular cults having any influence on burial ritual, except in the sense that a faithful follower of a deity might have a cult object such as a figurine included in their personal possessions put into the grave.

The religion most often thought to have influenced ancient ideas about the dead and their treatment was of course Christianity. It has frequently

been asserted or assumed that the rise of Christianity was directly responsible for the change of burial practice from cremation to inhumation. However, it was conclusively demonstrated many years ago that inhumation became popular significantly earlier than Christianity. The wholesale shift from cremation to inhumation was a cultural upheaval of striking proportions. In the later second century the overwhelming majority of people were cremated; by the late third century most were inhumed (fig. 34.3). All members of society took part in this phenomenon, from the provincial aristocrat to the rural peasant. There were always exceptions to the general rule, and the rites were practised at the same time

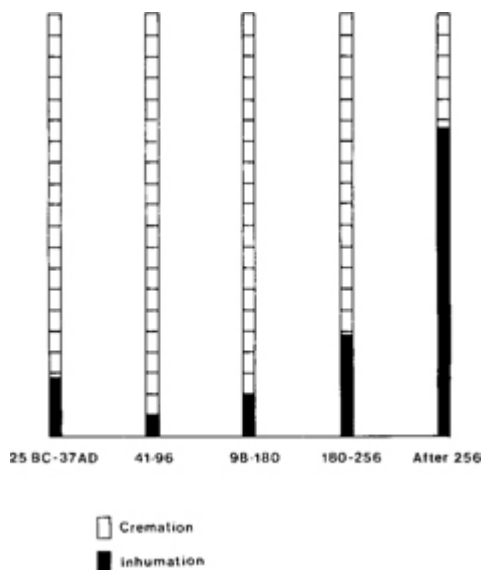


Figure 34.3 Histogram of cremation and inhumation cemeteries in northern Gaul, by period (after van Doorselaer)

in the same cemeteries. Nevertheless, there is no questioning the clarity of the general picture of change, nor is there any easy explanation how it spread so thoroughly and so quickly in the ancient world, without the aid of legal pronouncement, and certainly without mass media. The mechanisms of how the ideas spread are surprising for their efficiency, but elude attempts to understand exactly how they worked. It is easy to see how the rise of Christianity has been seen as an attractive explanation. However, the religious historian Arthur Nock showed in 1932 that inhumation became fashionable among prominent people in Rome as early as the end of the first century AD, perhaps because people were tempted by the opportunities for ostentation provided by using *sarcophagi*. He also pointed

out that the early Christians inhumed their dead not because they saw cremation as a denial of the resurrection of the flesh, but because they followed Jewish custom, being part of the Jewish tradition. Nock argued that the spread of inhumation was essentially carried by the forces of fashion (Nock, 1932). The many excavations of cemeteries in the half century since Nock wrote have confirmed his central point, that inhumation became popular before Christianity (Jones, 1981). It is less clear why people were so receptive to the new ideas. Nock was adamant in seeing the shift in burial practice as no hint of a broader change in religious thought, but many others have tried to suggest that the rise of inhumation was one aspect of a changing view on the world which was widely experienced and provided the background for the eventual acceptance of Christianity. That Roman cemeteries played a role in the development of Christianity will be seen later.

It is from the archaeological remains that most can now be found out about burial

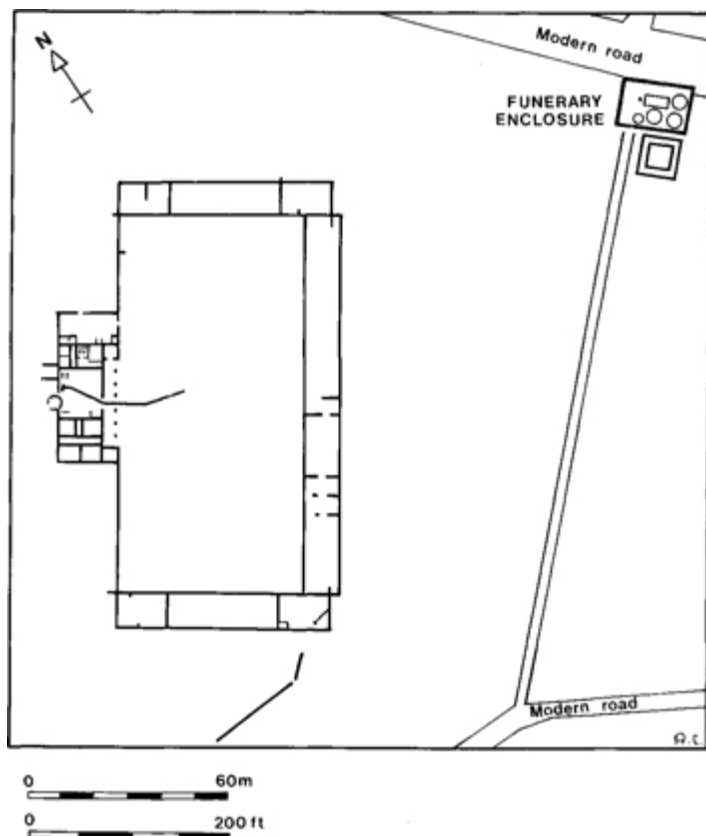


Figure 34.4 Plan of the villa and mausoleum at Newel, near Trier (*after Wightman*)

customs. To do this, the full range of burial forms must be understood. The burials of the upper classes, perhaps accompanied by the musicians and professional mourners described already, have left an impressive series of major funerary monuments and mausolea. Such structures tended to follow their own patterns and are sometimes to be found in urban cemeteries and sometimes in the countryside on the estates of the deceased's family (Toynbee, 1971). Some were very grand, such as the tomb of the Scipios near Tarragona (pl. 34.9), or the mausoleum of the Julii at St-Rémy-de-Provence (Glanum), which followed an Italian style (pl. 34.6). Others were eccentric like the pyramid of Gaius Cestius and the tomb of the baker, Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces, both at Rome. All date to the late republican or early imperial periods, as do the more modest tomb-gardens at Pompeii (pl. 34.3), which add a further dimension to the understanding of these monumental tombs and walled enclosures (Jashemski, 1979). Of rather later date, but still on an imposing scale, is the mid-fourth-century

mausoleum at Centcelles, near Tarragona in Spain (pl. 34.7), with a surviving dome decorated with a painted frieze showing biblical figures and a hunting scene: it was clearly built by a rich and

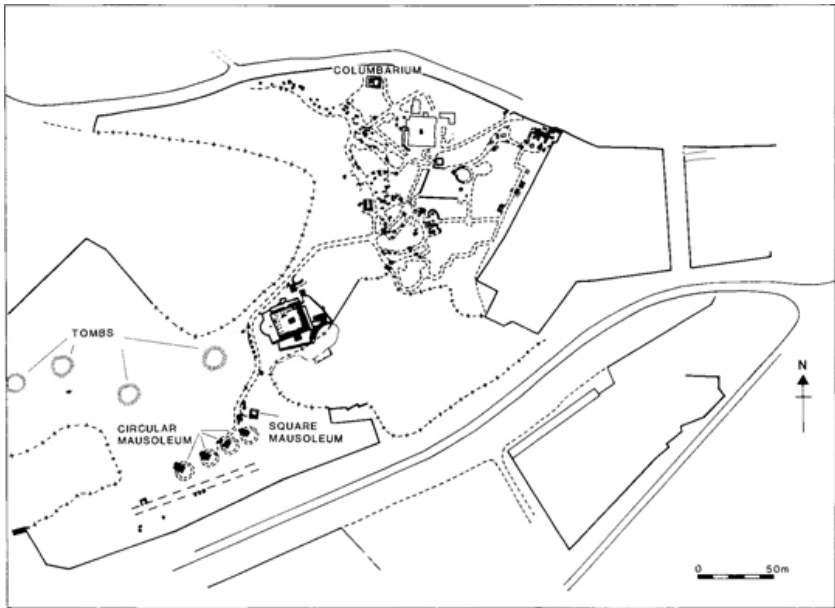


Figure 34.5 Plan of the cemetery at Carmona (*after Bendala*)

important Christian, perhaps even for Constans I, who died in 350 (Toynbee, 1971, 161–3; Gorges, 1979, 411–12; Fernández Castro, 1982, 59 and fig. 21). The Centcelles mausoleum was an integral part of a much larger villa complex and is a very grand example of the villa mausoleum. More simple versions can be found at many sites such as Newel near Trier (fig. 34.4). All these monuments followed classical architectural traditions, but this was not always the case. In particular there was a series of barrow burials which has been recognized in northern Gaul and south-eastern Britain, as well as some further east in Noricum and Pannonia. These were imposing earth mounds covering elaborate burials, and dating in some cases as late as the third century (Jessup, 1959; Amand, 1960; 1965). They shared with monuments in more classical forms the quality of impressing the onlooker with the importance of the person buried there (pl. 34.8).

Most of these monumental tombs of the rich tend to survive in isolation, at least outside places like Pompeii or Ostia in Italy. However, at the town of Carmona in southern Spain a very large and well-preserved cemetery contains hundreds of more or less monumental tombs, surrounded by many

more humbler graves (fig. 34.5). Unfortunately little has been done there beyond recording some of the more important monumental tombs and their decoration, but the potential of such a site is enormous. It could be made to reveal a fascinating picture of the burials of the whole spectrum of the town's society (Bendala Galán, 1976).

It is more normal in urban cemeteries for the majority of whatever monuments were there to be lost, leaving perhaps few traces among the burials of the masses of the population. However, it is by studying the large cemeteries attached to towns that it is possible to make some progress in understanding the trends in burial custom which were expressed by most of the urban population. The full extent of the problem of trying to understand the character of urban cemeteries is rarely appreciated. The weight of numbers is perhaps the most striking point. A modest provincial Roman town might have had a population of 2,000. That figure is inevitably a guess, as must be estimates of mortality and life-span, but they are guesses informed by what evidence there is for the demographic patterns of the ancient world and of more recent pre-industrial societies. If therefore the adult mortality rate was about twenty-five per thousand per year, this provincial town would have been burying some fifty people each year making a total in excess of 15,000 over the whole Roman period. A figure of this order of magnitude for a small provincial town makes the idea that a sample of fifty graves

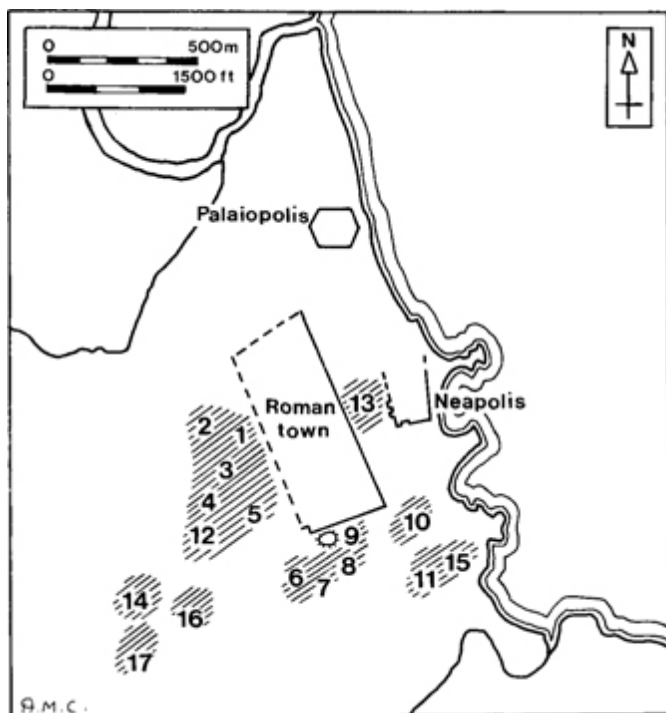


Figure 34.6 Plan of the cemeteries at Ampurias (*after Jones*)

excavated could be in any way representative of the whole cemetery unduly optimistic. It is laughable at major cities like Lyon, Arles or Trier, not to mention the extreme of Rome itself, where the population at its height has been estimated at one million. It is therefore crucial that urban cemeteries are examined on a large scale. The few cases where this has been done have revealed the potential for such work, but it is apparent that to draw useful conclusions at least hundreds of graves must be excavated, and preferably thousands.

At the site of Ampurias in north-east Spain, many graves were excavated in the 1940s covering all periods in the development of the place from the Greek colony in the sixth century BC to the late Roman settlement of the fifth century AD and beyond (Almagro, 1953; 1955). The cemeteries spread around the main foci of settlement, the Greek town (Neapolis) next to the sea and the Roman town on a hill overlooking it (fig. 34.6). The Roman period cemeteries were situated mostly to the west and south of the Roman town. There appeared to be an extensive cemetery west of the town, mostly of cremations, but it was excavated and recorded in the parcels of land of the modern field system. Detailed analysis of the graves and grave

goods has however shown that there were major variations of practice from one zone to another within that large cemetery (Jones, 1984a). The individual cremation burial areas in all the cemeteries could be split into two groups of richly-furnished and poorly-furnished graves (fig. 34.7). The difference of provision was very marked and occurred even between adjacent fields,

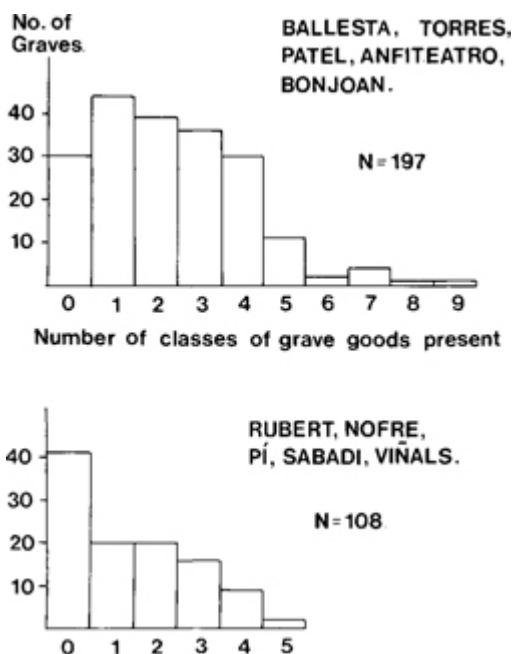


Figure 34.7 Rich and poor cemetery areas at Ampurias (after Jones)

where the style of burial might have been expected to be consistent. There were similar differences among the inhumations, though here expressed in grave form, as there were few grave goods as such. There were significant differences in the proportions of graves protected by a tile structure, burials under *amphorae*, and plain graves, both between individual cemeteries and between those cemeteries containing both cremations and inhumations and those exclusively for inhumations (figs 34.8 and 34.9). The interpretation of these variations is rather more difficult than their observation. Few of the graves have been dated individually, nor have the human remains been adequately studied. It is hard to assess the influence of date and the age and sex of the deceased. Only the difference between adult and child inhumations could be identified on the basis of the length of the skeleton, but that did allow a link between amphora-burials and child burials to be

established (fig. 34.10). The nature of the forces determining the other variations in burial custom can only be surmised, whether they be social and economic, or religious or ethnic. What is important here is to stress that Ampurias shows how

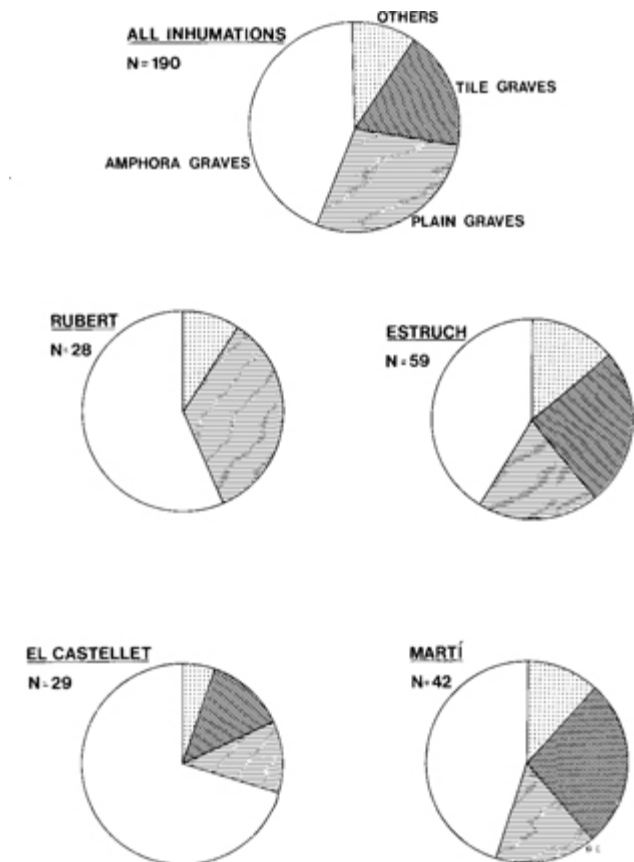


Figure 34.8 Ampurias: grave types in inhumation cemeteries (after Jones)

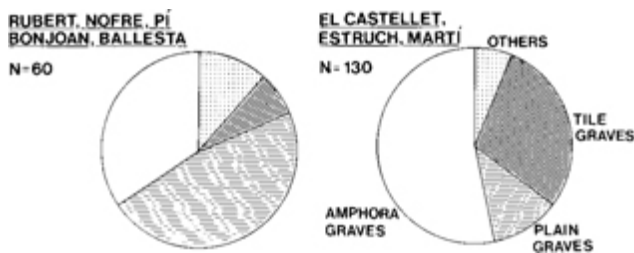


Figure 34.9 Ampurias: grave types in mixed rite and all-inhumation cemeteries (after Jones)

much difference in pattern there may have been in the various cemeteries around a Roman town, and within what seem to be single cemeteries. It emphasizes that now we can only really report on work in progress, since the systematic study of Roman cemeteries in this sort of way has only just begun.

Despite that, much work will still depend on observations made long ago. Another site where there is a good picture of the cemetery topography is York, but there most of the information comes from the records of nineteenth-century observers of building work as the town expanded. The collection of that work, coupled with the excavation of one part of a large cemetery, has served York well in terms of its cemetery archaeology (RCHM, 1962; Jones, 1984b). It is possible to see, for example, how there were two main cemeteries at The Mount and the Railway Station on the south-west side of the river Ouse, and another on the other side of the river around Bootham-Clifton, but that there were also many other smaller cemeteries scattered around the outskirts of

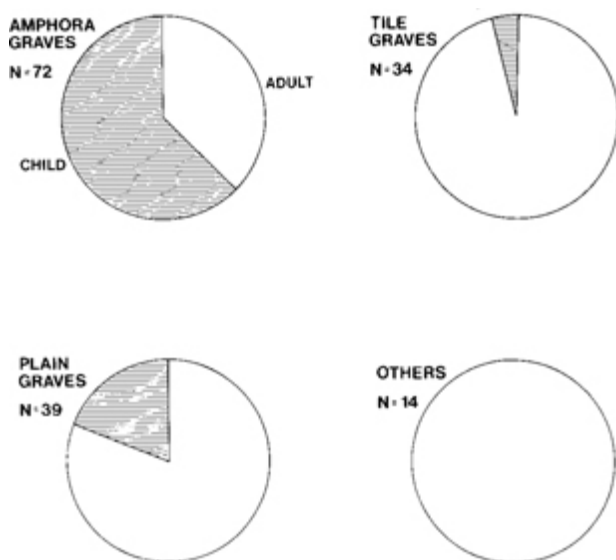


Figure 34.10 Amphurias: grave types related to children and adults (*after Jones*)

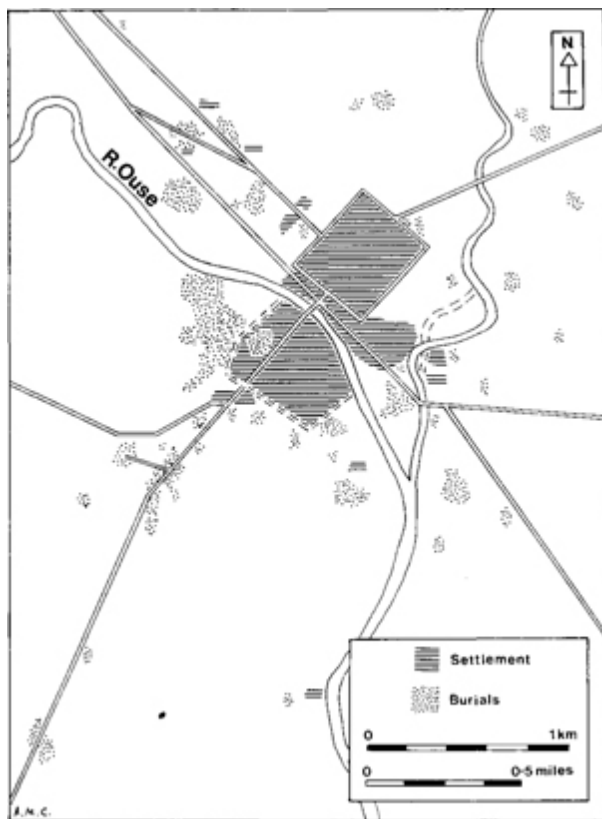


Figure 34.11 Cemeteries and settlements at York (*after Jones*)

the city and fortress (fig. 34.11). It was also the case that of these smaller cemeteries, the earlier ones tended to be farther from the main areas of settlement than the later ones, suggesting that the early limits of settlement were defined too widely, in an area that was never completely filled. There was also a curious pattern found in the Trentholme Drive area, at the south-western limit of The Mount cemetery. There burials were very densely packed and intercut in a most haphazard fashion. Burials disturbed even very recent earlier interments. Moreover, males outnumbered females by about four to one (fig. 34.12). A somewhat similar style has been found in the sector of a cemetery excavated at Cirencester in Britain. Again the burials were not aligned neatly in rows, although they were not as dense as at Trentholme Drive, and again men outnumbered women markedly, this time by five to two. No satisfactory explanation has been suggested for these two curious cases. The idea of a strong military presence at either or both sites, on a scale sufficient to cause the sex imbalance does not seem

plausible for the later Roman period, nor would it account for the lack of alignment of the graves. The two sites must be seen in their wider local contexts, when new excavations on

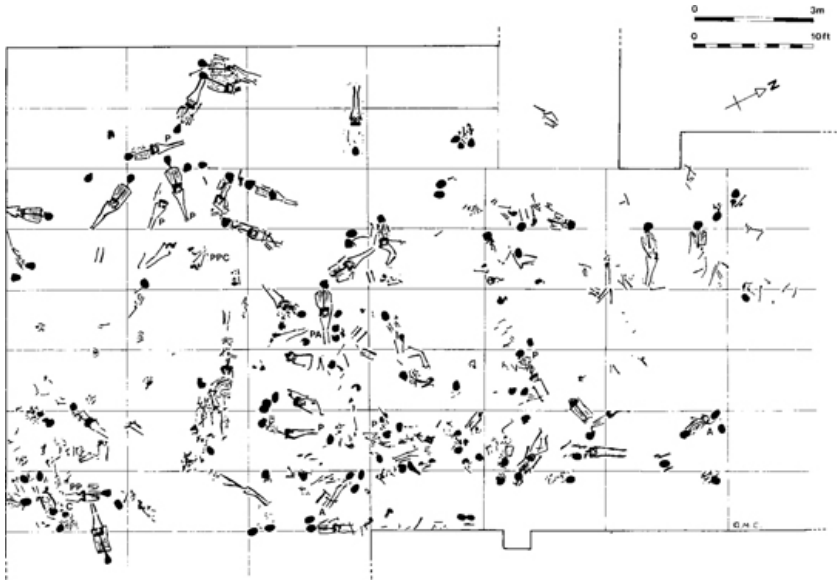


Figure 34.12 Plan of the Trentholme Drive cemetery at York (*after Wenham*)

other parts of the cemeteries may reveal how typical or how anomalous they are in the cemeteries of York and Cirencester.

They were certainly not typical of the late Roman cemeteries of Britain as a whole, nor of the rest of the western Empire. The normal pattern was of orderly rows of inhumation graves, such as at the Lankhills site at Winchester ([fig. 34.13](#)). Similar layouts are familiar from all parts of the western Empire: Tarragona in Spain, Tours in France, Nijmegen in the Netherlands, Xanten in Germany or Colchester and Dorchester in Britain. One of the main issues raised by these late Roman inhumation cemeteries is the presence or absence of Christian influence. It has already been argued that the change from cremation to inhumation was in no way caused by Christianity. On the other hand, following the conversion of Constantine the Empire's official religion was Christianity and inhumation burial did conform to what is thought of as Christian practice and what certainly was Christian practice in some places. In many cases it is hard to find explicit evidence for or against Christianity in fourth-century cemeteries, but sometimes there is positive evidence. The clearest example is that of the Catacombs in Rome where there is abundant Christian imagery in the

decoration (Stevenson, 1978). Similar underground burial chambers are found in other parts of the central Mediterranean as well as further



Figure 34.13 Plan of the cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester (*after Clarke*)

east, but they were exceptional in the west, where the open cemetery was everywhere the norm. At the Poundbury site at Dorchester in Britain, many burials have been found covered in gypsum plaster, which is widely considered an early Christian practice. Furthermore, some graves are surrounded by small buildings which were decorated with painted wall plaster portraying figures perhaps praying. These structures are best interpreted as small shrines marking the graves of several early Christians, perhaps even saints (pl. 34.10). In some cases much more substantial buildings were eventually constructed to supersede such simple shrines. These basilicas were often imposing buildings decorated with mosaics. The outcome of the process was the development during the early medieval period of a major church in the middle of what had been the Roman cemetery. Often this led to a shift in the centre of settlement, as probably happened at St Albans in Britain. At Tours in France (fig. 34.14) a second focus of settlement was created around the basilica of St Martin in the Roman cemetery area to the west of the other early medieval centre, which was established inside the late Roman defences. The Christian connection with the sites of the late Roman cemeteries has therefore had a marked influence on the development of urban topography in Europe.

If urban cemeteries lend themselves most readily to modern archaeological approaches simply because of their size, the rural population must not be overlooked. They must always have outnumbered their urban neighbours heavily, but because they tended to bury their dead near their settlements, the cemeteries tend to be small. The western provinces abound

with small groups of graves sometimes found apparently in isolation, sometimes quite clearly associated with a farming settlement, but always presumably serving some rural community. The small towns and villages had their cemeteries beyond their settlement areas, mirroring the cities, but individual farms also

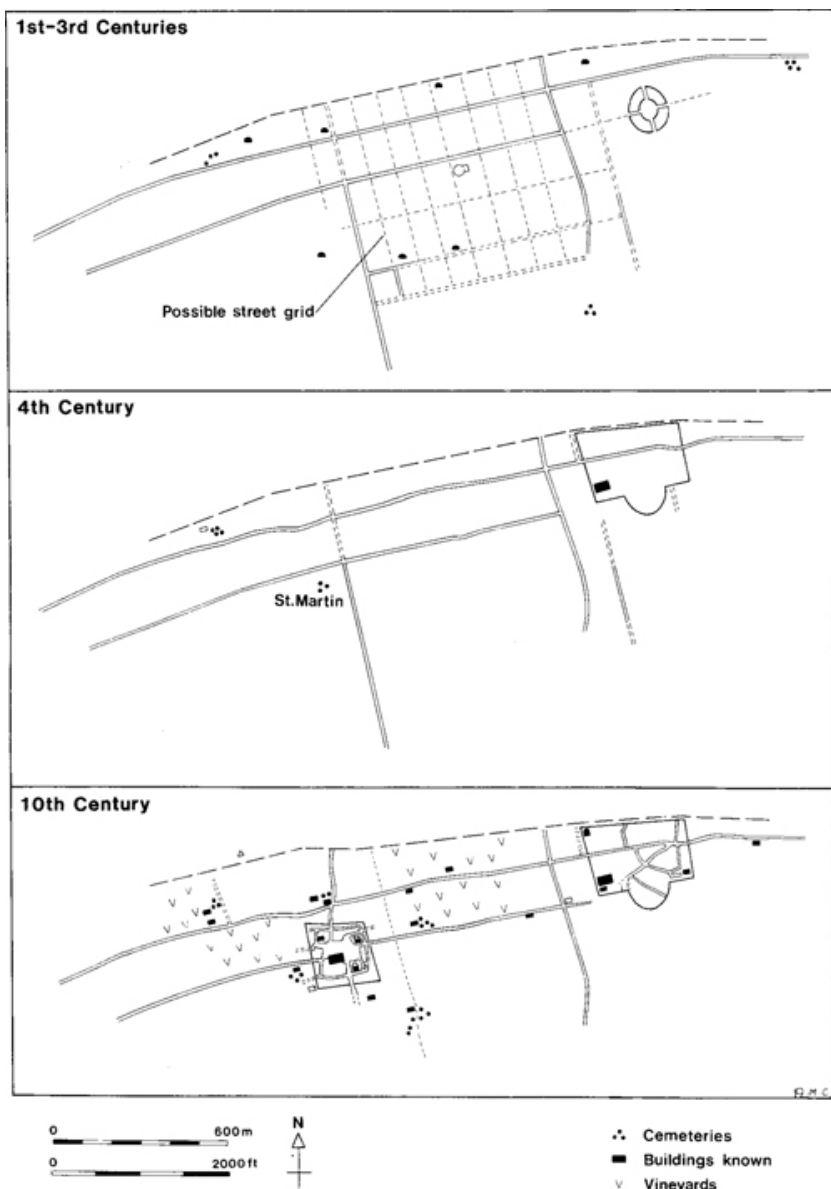


Figure 34.14 Urban development at Tours (*after Galinié and Randoin*)

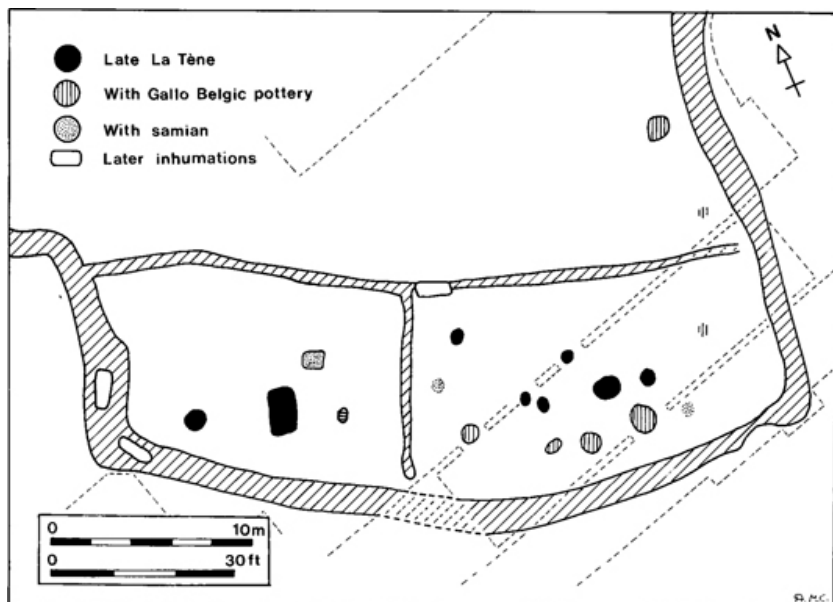


Figure 34.15 Plan of the cemetery at Owslebury (after Collis)

had their own burial areas. Several recently excavated examples of such sites show that the small cemeteries probably served the extended families working peasant farms, perhaps about ten people living there at any one time. In Britain at Owslebury in Hampshire and at Lynch Farm near Peterborough (figs 34.15 and 34.16) there were well defined cemetery areas with neatly arranged graves, as well as isolated graves dug in the field ditches of the farm. With only seventy graves excavated at Owslebury, spanning in date the whole Roman period, John Collis was still able to show how varied were the burial customs and to use them to suggest the social composition of the people using the cemetery. At Lynch Farm, burials were confined to the later Roman period but showed a marked difference between those in the ordered part of the cemetery and those disordered. Most of the graves in the ordered part were carefully aligned east–west and were respected by later burials. One grave, however, turned out to contain the successive burials of six adults and a new-born baby (pl. 34.11). We can only speculate on the reasons behind such behaviour, when apparently there was no shortage of space for graves. It is worth noting that although we might expect burial practices in the countryside to follow local pre-Roman traditions more closely than those of the towns, there is little evidence for it.

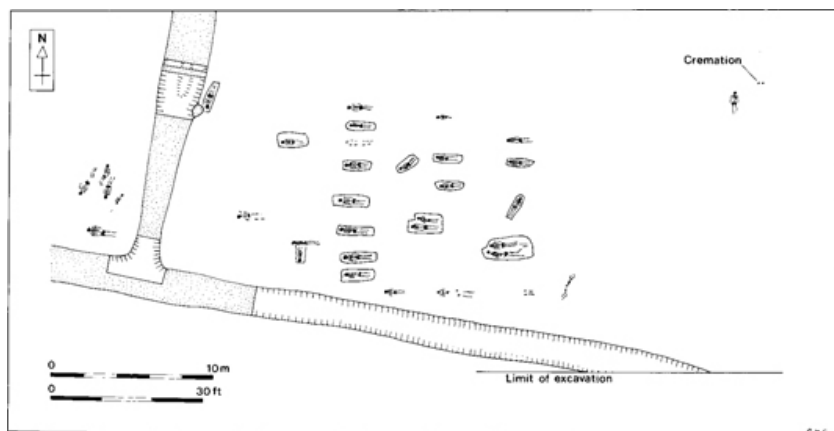


Figure 34.16 Plan of the cemetery at Lynch Farm (*after Jones*)

If burial practices can be seen as cultural artefacts, urban and rural cemeteries have much to tell us about patterns of society in the Empire. There were three levels of cultural integration quite clearly discernible. Overall there was a quite astonishing degree of conformity. In most places, whatever had been the practice before, within a generation or two of an area being incorporated into the Empire, and mostly by the end of the first century AD, the normal burial practice was cremation, usually with the remains collected from the pyre, and placed in the ground accompanied by a variety of grave offerings. Then, mainly during the third century came an even more thorough shift of practice as cremation was replaced by simple inhumation, establishing a pattern of burial practice which was to be consistently followed into modern times. In both early and late Roman periods, the exceptions were insignificant when set against the dominance of the rule.

However, within this overall homogeneity, a second level of patterning was working at regional level. Certain similarities of practice can be defined in provincial terms, or sometimes even in smaller units, such as a river basin or a city. These groupings were expressed in the method of cremation and collection of the remains, as in the Schelde Valley; or in the provision of small monuments as in north Africa, or in the types of grave goods as around Cimiez in southern Gaul. They no doubt sometimes related to continuing pre-Roman ideas and sometimes to the objects generally available in circulation to be used as grave goods. Nevertheless they show the definition of clear local identities in at least one sector of cultural behaviour (cf. Jones, 1982; forthcoming).

Third, within individual cemeteries there was often a wide range of

practice. Most commonly, this can be seen in the degree of complexity of the funerary provision:

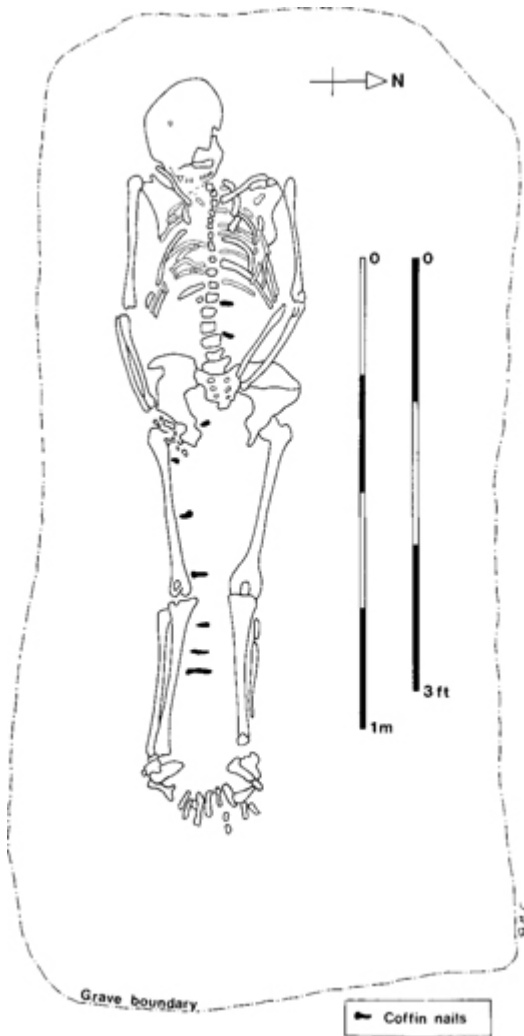


Figure 34.17 Inhumation in a wooden coffin (grave 31) at Lynch Farm (*after Jones*)

elaboration of the grave structure or the richness of the grave goods. This seems to have been the normal situation in cemeteries throughout the western Empire. There were other types of variation within cemeteries, but these are more difficult to understand (cf. Jones, 1984a).

In all these aspects of patterning in funerary behaviour, we are dealing essentially with the outward forms of burial, rather than explicit beliefs. Of

course, even then there are only those aspects of the form of burial which survive into the archaeological record. Despite the limitations of the evidence, burial does offer hints on the way the cultural systems of the Empire worked. In burial at least can be seen a part of how people defined themselves and their membership of groups in society. The threefold split into empire-wide, regional, and specifically local systems is worth pursuing into other areas of cultural behaviour in the Roman Empire.

Yet it must not be thought that these systems were static. Another characteristic of burial practice is rapid change. Considering the limited means of communication, it is remarkable how quickly the empire-wide changes came about. As in so many aspects of Roman life, a Roman time-traveller from the first century who visited the late fourth would only have recognized a small part of what was happening around him.

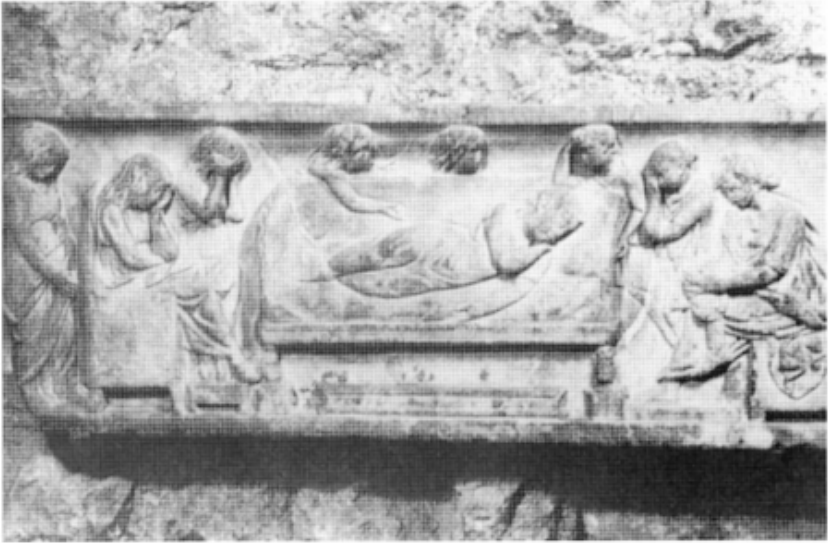
Beyond the Roman period itself, the large late Roman inhumation cemeteries took on a considerable importance in the transition to the medieval world. In many places cemeteries were still used for centuries after the political end of the Empire. This is true of places around the Mediterranean like Tarragona, where such things have come to be expected, and Frénouville in Normandy. Where the cemetery continued in use it must be likely that the community using it continued as well.

Conclusion

Studying Roman burials can yield a catalogue of ancient quirks. It can also give a special perspective on the workings of ancient society. That is the direction where advances can be expected in the future. The developing techniques of research on the human bones themselves offer exciting new insights not only on the health and living conditions of the ancient populations, but also of the funerary rituals by which people were dispatched from among the living (cf. Manchester, 1983; Wells, 1981; McWhirr, Viner and Wells, 1982). As new work is done on pathology and nutrition, anthropology and demography, the questions which can be asked of the burial evidence will be transformed.

While it is exciting to look ahead to the fruits of new work, it is worth remembering that the greatest potential seems to lie in ways of understanding ancient living conditions, or of identifying cultural patterns in living societies. Although the forms of chosen burial can be observed, what they really meant about how those people thought about death is still

elusive. That is just as true of the 'normal' burial as it is of the exotic decapitation. When we encounter such a practice, it should give pause to those who become too intoxicated with the 'civilized' achievements of the Roman Empire. The people who chopped off their neighbours' heads in the fourth century probably drank water brought to them in an aqueduct. The surface of Roman high culture should not persuade us too easily of a special difference between it and contemporary non-Roman societies. Roman civilization had its own barbarities, no less than others.



34.1 Relief of a dead girl on a couch, mourned by her surrounding family



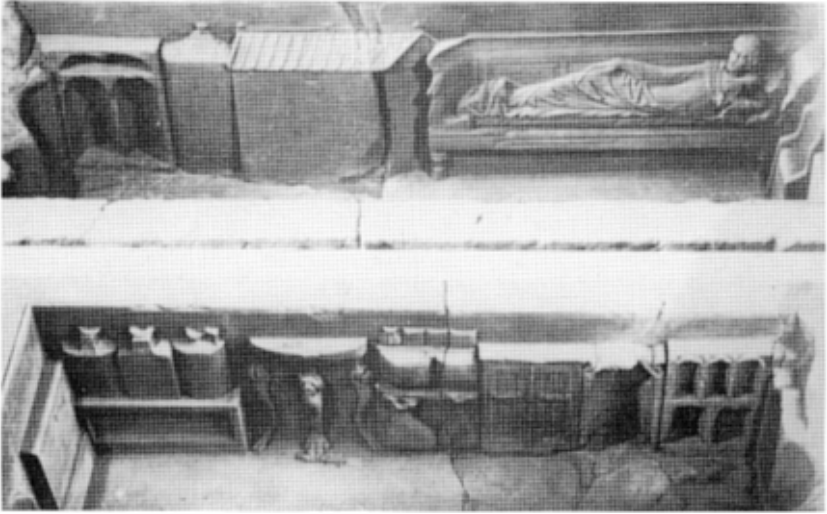
34.2 Relief of a funeral procession from Amiternum, Italy: the deceased is carried high on a bier and is accompanied by musicians, hired mourners and relatives



34.3 Street of the tombs, Pompeii



34.4 Cremation groups *in situ* at Chichester, Britain



34.5 The Simpelveld Sarcophagus, Holland; the tomb of a wealthy woman, with the interior of the sarcophagus carved to resemble a room with furniture



34.6 Monument of the Julii at Glanum (St-Rémy-de-Provence)



34.7 Mausoleum at Centcelles, near Tarragona, Spain



34.8 The Bartlow Hills, Essex; a group of Romano-British barrows



34.9 Tomb of the Scipios, near Tarragona, Spain



34.10 Poundbury cemetery, Dorchester: graves and a mausoleum



34.11 Collective grave, in all containing the remains of six adults and a baby, at Lynch Farm, near Peterborough, Britain

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PART 11

· POST-SCRIPT ·

· POST-SCRIPT ·

John Wachter

The end of the Roman Empire in the west is traditionally placed in AD 476, when the last of the western emperors, Romulus Augustulus was deposed. But the west had been beset by serious difficulties long before that, and many of the internal changes in the structure of the Empire can also be detected before they came to fruition in the fourth and fifth centuries.

One of the most critical changes was the final separation of the civil administration from the army ([Part 3, Chapter 7](#) and [Part 6, Chapter 17](#)), which in some ways can be seen as starting under Hadrian, when the career structure of civil servants was separated from that which had hitherto covered all officers, both military and civil, who aspired to imperial service. The style and mode of operation of the emperors also changed, so that by the fourth century most resembled absolute monarchs, and any final republican trappings, carefully fostered by Augustus and the early emperors, had been discarded. Administratively also, from the fourth century onwards, the Empire was divided into two parts, the West and East.

The stresses to which the frontiers were subjected, when combined with the restructuring of the army, also caused many changes ([Part 4](#)). The succession of barbarian invasions, which over-ran much of Gaul in the third century, led, by the early fourth, to the abandonment of all territory across the Rhine and upper Danube. In consequence, fortifications were added along the lines of both rivers, and the new styles of defensive architecture, which can be seen in use in many of them, were simultaneously extended northwards and eastwards to the mouths of both rivers; Dacia was abandoned at the same time, although a new province of that name was carved out of land south of the Danube. In the east, there was the third-

century interlude of Palmyra entering the power vacuum left by the breakdown of the frontier defences, and the later return, for a short time, of Diocletian's army to Mesopotamia. The replacement of a weakened Parthia by Persia led to a consolidation of fortifications, again in the new styles, along the traditional line of the Euphrates and thence stretching south through Syria and Arabia to the Red Sea and westwards across to the Mediterranean through the modern Negev. Pressures were also building along the extensive boundaries in Africa, and, as elsewhere, more troops were deployed, often in small fortlets of the type which is so characteristic of Africa and the east in the later Roman period. Chief among the changes, though, was the recognition that linear barriers and boundaries were generally inadequate to bar a determined invader, leading to the establishment of a number of mobile field armies, which tended to become the elite troops of the Empire.

By the fourth century also, most urban sites ([Part 5](#)) of any merit not already fortified received walls and, as such, came to play an increasing part in imperial defence, providing a series of centres which not only protected the organs of the administration, but also acted as refuges for the local inhabitants, their livestock and harvested crops. In many of the frontier provinces small fortified road stations were constructed along major routes between principal towns and cities. Quite often when defences were erected for the first time around these sites, only a fraction of the settlement area was enclosed, suggesting either a considerable reduction in population, or a concentration on those buildings and functions which really mattered. Internally many towns changed also, with migrations of wealth to and from the countryside.

Naturally, the insecurity felt in the countryside in some provinces, particularly in the west, in consequence of breaches of the frontiers, produced some profound changes ([Part 7](#)). It has, for instance, been argued that the quite exceptional growth of large villas in Britain during the fourth century was caused partly by a flight of capital from Gaul and Germany.

The effects of these changes on the economy of the Empire ([Part 8](#)) were patchy. Insecurity was bad for the transport of goods, both by road - due to brigandage - and sea - due to piracy. Surprisingly trade continued at a fairly high level of activity, until the ultimate destruction of the western markets in the fifth century brought about its virtual termination. Other factors to affect it were severe inflation, intermittently from the third century on, and the exhaustion of some of the principal mines in Spain, whence had come much of the Empire's gold and silver. Closer control was also exercised over some industries, such as clothing, to secure supplies for the army.

Society also changed radically ([Part 9](#)), partly owing to the grant of Roman citizenship to all free-born inhabitants of the Empire in the early third century, which removed one of the chief divisions between social classes. But new ones appeared, notably that between the so-called *honestiores* and *humiliores*; the latter were much more harshly treated with regard to legal processes, invariably being questioned under torture, while the former were more leniently treated. The peasant class became more and more bound to the land, usually through debt, and although ostensibly 'free' were, in fact, little better than slaves. In many occupations, including the curial class, families found themselves in hereditary employment. Attempts to elevate themselves into a higher class must often have led to bribery, which became rife in many of the Empire's affairs, so chipping away at morality and the fabric of society.

In religion, the fundamental change came with the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in the fourth century, following the personal conversion of the Emperor Constantine ([Part 10](#)). Some attempts were made to restore the 'old order', notably under Julian, and there is little doubt that pagan cults and practices lingered on in some rural or remote areas, although subjected to increasingly severe measures by the early Church.

The Roman Empire survived as long as it did, which was longer than most other empires known to history, because its chief strength lay in 'government by consent', backed, in the last resort, by overwhelming force. This meant that by far the highest proportion of the population was probably content to be so ruled, taking advantage of the peace and protection which the *Pax Romana* ensured. Conditions within the Empire would generally have been far superior to those existing beyond the frontiers. So long as these conditions lasted, all was well. But the combination of internal disorder, external threat and economic disarray in the third century threatened the Empire's survival. On that occasion it did not prove fatal, but the Empire which re-emerged from it had changed fundamentally, while the increasingly repressive methods which were introduced to bolster its crumbling structure can have appealed to few; the consent had become divorced from the government. Morale was sapped, and the Empire began to lose its self-respect; it relied more and more on lower-grade citizens, recruited from beyond the frontiers and settled within them, to do its fighting. Consequently, when the massive attacks from central Europe were mounted against the very heart of the traditional Empire - Rome itself - there was little power of resistance left and Rome fell in 410 to Alaric. Disintegration was not even then immediate, although

effective overall political control was lost in the west. Fortunately the seat of real government had already left Rome, with the division of the Empire into two parts, and from the middle of the fourth century Constantine's great city of Byzantium - renamed Constantinopolis - became the power centre, with its marked eastward shift. Not surprisingly, the eastern Empire was more successful in repelling invaders and containing internal strife, and its separation from the west ensured its survival, much changed - even in name - for a further thousand years, until Constantinople finally fell to the Moslem invaders in 1453. Although the Byzantine Empire was very different from the Roman Empire, it nevertheless inherited many of the customs and traditions of Rome and maintained that inheritance into the Middle Ages.

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